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PAGE

LENTEN MANUAL,

AND

COMPLANION FOR PASSION TIME AND EASTER
WEEK.

TRANSLATED AND COMPILED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES.

BY THE

REVEREND FATHER W. J. DUNN, S. J.

OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUITS.

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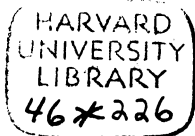
BY THE
RIGHT REV. DR. WALSH,
BISHOP OF HALIFAX.

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*Now is the acceptable time. These are the days of salvation.*  
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NEW YORK:
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599 BROADWAY.

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PASTORAL FOR LENT.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

The holy and penitential season of Lent is about to commence; "the acceptable time" of grace, "the days of salvation" and mercy will soon begin; and our Holy Mother the Church, through the voice of her chief pastors, calls upon her faithful children throughout the whole world, "to turn to the Lord their God with their whole hearts, in fasting, in weeping, and in mourning."

Charged as we have been by the venerable Head of the Church, with your pastoral superintendence, and being appointed so to "watch as to render an

account of your souls," we feel as if at this moment the earnest admonition of the Prophet Joel were addressed to us:—

"Blow the trumpet in Sion, sanctify a Fast, call a solemn assembly, gather together the People, sanctify the Church, assemble the ancients, gather together the little ones, and them that suck at the breasts; let the bridegroom go forth from his bed, and the bride out of the bridal chamber. Between the porch and the altar, the ministers of the Lord shall weep and shall say: 'Spare, O Lord, spare thy people, and give not thine inheritance to reproach.'"

We, therefore, sound in your ears this salutary and penitential trumpet; we proclaim this solemn Fast, hallowed as it is by Church authority, Apostolic observance, and Divine ordinance. We summon you more frequently to the House of God, that you may listen to

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his divine law, and meditate upon its eternal truths; that you may recount before him, and "in the bitterness of your hearts," all the sinful years of your past lives, and that by "laying the axe to the root" of your vices and criminal habits you may "bring forth fruits worthy of penance," purify and sanctify your souls. We invite the young and the old, the married and the single, the clergy and the laity, to unite together during this auspicious period, and by fasting, prayer, and other good works, to offer a holy violence to Heaven. For now our glorious King and Saviour collects all his forces together under the triumphant standard of the Cross, to fight against our common enemy in one general engagement. How can we refuse, dearly beloved brethren, to enter into this sacred warfare, under so renowned and victorious a Leader? Upon what pretext can we decline the

wholesome rigors of a contest which is shared with us by the universal Church?

Hence we cry out with the Apostle, "that all should everywhere do penance," (Acts xvii. 30,) because, in the language of Eternal Truth himself: "unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii.) Penance is necessary for salvation, since we are all sinners; "For there is no man that sinneth not." (3 Kings viii. 46.) And "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John i. 8.) Therefore "delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day." (Eccl. v. 8.) "But, forasmuch as the Lord is patient, let us be patient for the same thing; and with many tears let us implore his pardon." (Judith viii. 14.) "For if we do not penance, we shall fall into the hands of the Lord." (Eccles. ii. 22.) "But if the wicked do penance

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for all his sins which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments, and do judgment and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die." (Ezec. xviii. 21.) "Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts iii. 19.)

But this saving penance cannot be accomplished, unless we make entire satisfaction to God. Now, the Church in her wisdom enables us to make an efficacious atonement during the holy season of Lent, by fasting, alms-deed, and prayer. We will thus perform our duties to ourselves, to our neighbor, and to God. Fasting will be the holocaust and purification of our bodies, alms-deed the relief of our neighbor, and prayer the union of our souls with God.

Need we remind you on this occasion, dearly beloved brethren, of the precious advantages of fasting? Both by word

and example is its practice enforced in the Old and New Testament. Moses and Elias fasted forty days, and the former was thereby rendered worthy to receive the written Law of God, while the latter obtained the inestimable privilege of conversing with the Lord, face to face. (Deut. ix. 9, 18; 3 Kings xix. 8.)

Sampson and Samuel were the fruit of their mothers' fasting, and by fasting was Sarah delivered from the power of the devil. When the Jews, after their sin, were defeated by the Philistines, they fasted by the direction of the prophet. (1 Kings vii. 6.) By fasting and repentance the impious Ahab averted the indignation of heaven. (3 Kings xxi. 27.) When a multitude of enemies came to assault the pious Josaphat, "he proclaimed a fast for all Juda." (2 Paral. xx. 3.) Esdras and Nehemias, Judith and Esther fasted also, and their fasting was acceptable in

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the sight of God. Daniel fasted, and was favored with the most sublime revelations, and honored with a visit from an angel. (Daniel x.) The wicked city of Nineveh was saved from its threatened destruction, by fasting and penance. (John i.) Anna, the prophetess, who deserved to behold and adore the Expectation of Israel, "departed not from the temple, serving night and day by fasting and prayers." (Luke ii. 37.) But why need we speak of the saints of the old or the new covenant; of David, who "humbled his soul in fasting," (Ps. xxxiv. 18,) or of Paul, who fasted, "chastised his body, and brought it into subjection," (1 Cor ix. 27; 2 Cor. xi. 27,) when we have the illustrious example of our Lord and master, the Holy of holies, the Model of sanctity, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," who was led by the Spirit of God into the desert, where "he fasted

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forty days and forty nights!" (Mat. iv. i.) "Looking, therefore, on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who, having joy proposed to him, underwent the cross." (Heb. xii. 2.) "Crucify your flesh, with its vices and concupiscences," (Gala. v. 24,) and "humble your souls with fasting." (Ps. xxxiv. 13.) "Be afflicted and mourn and weep. Be humble in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you." (James iv. 9, 10.) "Make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit." (Ezech. xvii. 32.) "Rend your hearts, and not your garments; and be ye converted to the Lord your God." (Joel ii. 13.)

The fast of Lent, as our Holy Mother the Church teaches us, was instituted for the wholesome cure of body and soul. (*Orat. in Sabb. post Cineres.*) Fasting subjects the rebellious flesh to the dominion of reason, exalts and purifies the soul, weakens the sting of concupiscence,

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fills the heart with chaste desires, expels the devil, introduces the Spirit of God, adorns the Christian with all virtue, and ensures its glorious reward. (*Præf. Quadrag.*)

Fasting, however, is but a means to an end; and that great end is the destruction of sin. We should fast as an atonement for sin, and we should fast to prevent the danger of falling into sin. For unless we fast from sin, all our fasting will be in vain. Do not, therefore, dearly beloved brethren, fast like hypocrites, with the body only, but preserve your souls from the contamination of sin. Otherwise you may be forced to say to the Lord, with the Prophet, "Why have we fasted, and thou hast not regarded; have we humbled our souls and thou hast not taken notice?" And he will answer, "Behold, in the day of your fast your own will is found." (Isai. lviii. 3.)

Let your fasting be accompanied with good works, and especially works of mercy to the poor. For, "is not this rather the fast" that the Lord "has chosen?" Deal thy bread to the hungry; and bring the needy and the harborless into thy house: when thou shalt see one naked, cover him, and despise not thy own flesh. (Id. v. 6, 7.) We will thus propitiate the Lord, and be enabled to say with joy, "we fasted, and besought our God, and it fell out prosperously unto us." (Esdras viii. 23.)

To your fasting and good works you must also add the continual exercise of holy prayer, for, as the Angel of the Lord said unto Tobias, "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold." (Tob. xii. 8.) Pray, therefore, and pray without intermission, as the Apostle recommends. (1 Thess. v.) Pray for the whole world,

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for our Most Holy Father Pius IX., for the propagation of the Catholic Faith, for the conversion of sinners, for the establishment of peace and good will on earth. Pray for yourselves and for your families, and pray with confidence in the name of Jesus, for whatever you ask the Father in that name will be certainly granted to you. (John xvi. 28.)

As the Holy Season of Lent is also set apart for preparing ourselves to comply with the annual obligation of Confession and Easter Communion, as commanded by the Church under the most grievous penalties, in the Fourth General Council of Lateran, (*Omnis utriusque*), we earnestly beseech you not to neglect this important duty, lest you subject yourselves to the indignation of Almighty God, and the heaviest censures of his Church. Dispose your souls, therefore, by holy retirement, self-examination, and true com-

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punction, to obtain the pardon of your gracious God, to whom "an afflicted spirit is a sacrifice," and who will not despise an humbled and contrite heart. (Ps. i.) "Go and show yourselves to the priest," (Mat. viii. 4; Luke xviii. 14;) by a good confession, that you may be cleansed from the leprosy of sin; for, as the Holy Ghost assures us, "He that hideth his sins shall not prosper; but he that shall confess and forsake them shall obtain mercy." (Prov. xxviii. 12.) You will thus with purified minds worthily receive the precious Body and Blood of the Lord, in commemoration of his death, and as the nourishment of your souls to life everlasting. (John vi. 59.)

We will always, therefore, "bear about in our bodies the mortification of Jesus, . . . that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh." (2 Cor. ii. 10, 11.) We will "through

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the blood" of Christ, in his holy sacraments, "cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God." (Heb. ix. 14.) And having fasted and suffered, in imitation of our Lord and Redeemer, during the Forty Days that are approaching, we will deserve to arise, at the great festival of Easter, to a new life, and to participate in the benefits of his Glorious Resurrection.

"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great pastor of the sheep, our Lord Jesus Christ, make you perfect in every good work, that you may do his will; working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom is glory for ever and ever."

✠ WILLIAM, *Bishop of Halifax.*



STATIONS
FOR
THE HOLY TIME
OF
LENT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
OF
PÈRE BERTHIER, S. J.



“Thus saith the Lord : Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping, and in mourning. And rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God.—*Joel* ii. 12, 13.”

THE following Instructions were written by that distinguished ornament of the French Church and the Society of Jesus, Father Bourdaloue, at the request, and for the use of a Lady of rank. They are equally suited to Christians in every state of life, and explain, with brevity and clearness, the designs of the Catholic Church in the Institution of Lent.

INSTRUCTIONS
FOR
THE TIME OF LENT.

1. **REMEMBER** well, that Lent is a time devoted to penance, and that we may, consequently; apply to it what St. Paul said to the Corinthians—*Behold now is the acceptable time; these are the days of salvation*, (2 Cor. 6,) because, there is no time of the year more favorable to us than that in which we labor to appease the wrath of God, and no days more precious for salvation than those which are employed in the expiation of our sins. It is your duty, then, to enter into this senti-

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ment of the Apostle. Although your whole life ought to be a continual penance, considering the faults of which you acknowledge yourself guilty in the sight of God, you should devote yourself particularly in Lent to the practice and exercises of so important and necessary a virtue; so, that you may be able to say, *Behold, now is my favorable time*; and that it may truly be in your regard a time of repentance. For what reproaches might you not expect from God, if, whilst the whole Church is in penance, you should not; and, if by the unhappy disorders of a dissolute and sensual life, you should pass over the time of Lent without at all sharing in the public penance of Christians? In this case, far from being to you that time of grace and salvation to which St. Paul alludes, it would serve only to condemn you, and hence your impenitence, which is at all times

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criminal, would be doubly culpable during this.

II. There is no reason which will dispense you from penance, because the law of penance is a general law, from which no one is exempt—a law which can be observed in all conditions of life, and against which carnal prudence could never urge other than vain and frivolous objections. The more difficult the exact observance of this law seems to you in your present condition, the more efforts you should make to obey it, because it is precisely on account of this repugnance that you have still greater need of penance. Your very infirmities, instead of rendering the observance of this law impossible, are, on the contrary, in the designs of heaven, powerful helps to enable you to fulfil it, either by serving you as penance, as in the case of sickness, when your strength is weakened, or by furnish-

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ing occasions for obtaining holy triumphs over yourself, when they are mere ordinary inconveniences which you should overcome by fervor of spirit, so as to make your body, according to the expression of the Doctor of Nations, a living and agreeable host in the sight of God. The totally different manner in which you have lived should not only serve to confound you, but should also animate you against yourself, and strongly excite you to repair every thing prejudicial to this divine law of penance, which self-love has induced you to commit. These are the sentiments with which you should enter on Lent—resolved, by some means or other, to obey this law, which you should not consider a heavy yoke, or an onerous law, but rather a law of grace, upon which your happiness depends.

III. The whole of the Lenten penance, as St. Leo the Great has well remarked,

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is not confined to fasting and abstinence. These are a portion of the penance, but they do not form its principal and most essential part. Although the precept of fasting and abstinences does not bind in certain cases, that of penance always subsists; and as there are in the world careless Christians, who, by a kind of hypocrisy, fast without doing penance, either because they fast without renouncing their sins, or because, by a thousand little indulgences, they contrive to fast without mortification—an hypocrisy of fasting so often condemned in scripture: so, by a conduct entirely opposite, faithful souls when unable to fast, know well how to do penance without fasting; because, without fasting, they know how to conquer themselves, to refrain from the delicacies of life, to walk in the narrow paths of salvation, and to practise in every thing else the severity of the gospel.

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Follow this rule, and consider yourself the more obliged to penance in proportion as you are less capable of observing rigorously, and to the letter, the commandment of fasting. For it is certain, that a dispensation from the one only increases your obligations to the other. If you reason as a Christian, you will act in this manner, so that God shall lose nothing of his rights, and the delicacy of your health not prevent you from completing the measure of your penance.

IV. As a consequence of these principles, the first thing which God requires of you, and which you are bound to ask from God for all this holy time, is the spirit of salutary compunction, that spirit of penance with which David was filled, and the impression and efficacy of which you should, after his example, endeavor to obtain. That is, your most serious oc-

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cupation every day during Lent should be to recall before God, in the bitterness of your soul, the disorders of your life, to acknowledge with grief their enormity and number, to humble and afflict yourself on their account, and never to lose sight of them, so that you may be able to say with the holy King, *My sin, O Lord, is always before me*, (Ps. l,) for, according to scripture, it is in this the spirit of penance consists. Now, an excellent practice for this purpose would be to perform all your actions during Lent in this spirit, and through the influence of this spirit; going to mass, for instance, as to a sacrifice which you are about to offer yourself for the expiation of your sins; praying like the Publican, and never presenting yourself before God but in the quality of a penitent, overpowered by the weight of your sins; subjecting yourself with a cheerful heart to the painful duties of

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your state, as a means of effacing your sins: proposing to yourself the ransom of your sins as a motive in every good work; getting up, and lying down with this reflection: I am an unfaithful creature, and God suffers me to be on the earth, only that I may do penance for my sins. This continual sight of your sins will nourish within you the spirit of penance, and nothing will assist you more, to acquire and preserve it, than the habit of acting in this manner.

V. If you be so happy as to be moved by this spirit of penance, it ought to produce in you an effect which naturally flows from it, and which is its unfailing characteristic—namely, penance of spirit, that is, a firm and constant disposition to mortify your understanding, your humor, your passions, your inclinations, your evil habits, but above all, your pride, which is, perhaps, your greatest obstacle

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to Christian penance. For the foundation of Christian penance is humility, and as long as you are ruled by a secret pride, do not rely on your penance. In order then to correspond with the designs of God, and at the same time to celebrate the Lent in the spirit of the Church, be animated with the spirit of penance, labor to become more humble, more meek, more patient, more compassionate to the weaknesses of others, more free from self-esteem. You must speak less freely of your neighbor's faults, and be more slow to condemn him. If, in despite of you, you cannot respect him, you must not add to it the malignant pleasure of displaying this feeling. If you take no care to do violence to yourself on these points, no matter what penance you perform, you do not commence with that which ought to justify all the others in the sight of God, and without which, all other pen-

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ances are vain. For in vain, said the Prophet, shall we rend our garments if we do not rend our hearts: a change of heart and spirit alone constitute true penance; without it, that which we believe to be penance, is only its shadow and phantom. Moreover, there is no one to whom this spiritual penance is more suitable than yourself, as you acknowledge that it is by the spirit you have principally sinned.

VI. Penance that is merely interior is not sufficient, and we are taught by all the oracles of faith, that we must add to it exterior penance, because the corruption of sin being equally diffused over the exterior and interior man, God, says St. Augustine, requires from us, with regard to each, the testimony of our sorrow. Conformably to this maxim, you should be, during Lent, more faithful than ever, to the little mortifications

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which God inspires you to prescribe for yourself, so that, at least, in something you may have the consolation, according to the words of St. Paul, *of bearing in your body the mortification of the Lord, and exhibiting it in your mortal flesh.* (2 Cor. iv.) For the same reason, the time of Lent ought to enkindle your fervor, and move you to pay to the sick, whom God has intrusted to your care, those visits of charity, and even those humiliating services which they expect at your hands. For, those services and visits are works of penance to you; and you should remember, that as faith without works is dead, so the spirit of penance is extinguished by degrees, unless it be nourished by the works of penance. You should also take care, as much as lies in your power, to be more plain and moderate in your dress during Lent, than at any other time of the year, because the Holy Ghost in va-

rious parts of scripture, makes this modesty in dress, one of the penitential duties of sinners, whence it arose that in the primitive church, penitents were clothed in sackcloth and covered with ashes. You do not profess a different religion from them, and it should be your entire study to conform to their example, as far as the duties of your condition will permit.

VII. Alms, according to the doctrine of the Holy Fathers, having been always considered inseparable from fasting, because the poor, they said, should profit by the repentance of the rich, it is evident that this obligation of the rich becomes greater in their regard, when they are dispensed from fasting for legitimate reasons. Alms is then no longer a simple accompaniment of fasting: it must supply its place. It should, therefore, be more abundant, as being doubly due—from

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fasting and from alms itself. By this standard, you should regulate your alms during this holy season; not confining yourself to the alms, which by the common law of charity you are bound to give at all times, but adding those extraordinary alms which the law of penance imposes, because it is certain that a sinner owes more to God on this head than a Christian who has preserved the grace of his innocence. Your alms, in order to supply the place of fasting, and to form a part of your penance, should cost you something; that is, you should give them out of what you would refuse to yourself, and one of your devotions in Lent should be to sacrifice to God certain things of which you desire to deprive yourself, that you may be enabled to assist your neighbor, preferring the relief of his miseries to your own sensuality, curiosity, and vanity. It is by victims such as these,

says the holy Apostle, that God is propitiated.

VIII. But this is not all: in order to sanctify Lent, you must abstain more from the pleasures and vain joys of the world; nothing being more opposed to the spirit of religion, and above all to the spirit of penance, than what is called pleasure; especially in a time dedicated by the Church to solemn penance. Hence a Christian soul should at this time abandon not only the profane amusements, which are never permitted, such as plays, comedies, and dances, but even innocent amusements, worldly conversations, assemblies, promenades, and every thing that is calculated to destroy the spirit of recollection and compunction. Even persons that are most separated from the world by their state of life, should enter into this practice, and take particular care, during the time of Lent, to abstain

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from certain recreations, and make a sacrifice of them to God. This, however, is to be understood of things that are neither necessary nor useful, and which may be omitted without prejudice to a greater good; and when it is given up for the sake of health, or a proper relaxation of mind, it should be accompanied by a secret sorrow at finding ourselves reduced to the necessity of using those little comforts, and to the inability of doing perfect penance, such as we would wish to be able to perform in order to acquit ourselves fully in the sight of God.

IX. Jesus Christ, during his forty days' fast retired to the desert, and even quitted his disciples; whence you should conclude that the Christian's Lent should be a time of retreat and separation from the world, as the Son of God acted thus for our instruction, and not for his own sanctification, and as the fast which he kept

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was only to serve as a model for ours. This is what all the Fathers of the Church have taught us. Follow, therefore, this great example. Resolve to separate yourself from the world, not for the love of your own ease, but through a zealous desire for your perfection. After the example of your Saviour, and guided, like him, by the spirit of God, go and pass certain days in your retirement, to commune there only with God and yourself. Do not even be content with this: but without changing your place, and without making your devotion depend on it, create in the midst of yourself an interior solitude, where in silence and removed from the tumult of the world, you may hold communion with God, bestowing more time every day during Lent to meditation and prayer. Is there any one in the world to whom this exercise of retreat, joined to meditation, and communion

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with heaven, is more necessary than to you? Prepare yourself, therefore, to desire all the advantages from it, which God in his mercy has connected with it for your salvation. For it is to yourself, and of yourself, that God speaks by the prophet Osee: *I will lead her into solitude, and there I will speak to her heart.* (Osee ii.)

X. The Word of God has been, from the first ages of Christianity, the spiritual nourishment which the Church has given to her children during the fast of Lent, and it is still very generally distributed. On this point you should not only accomplish your duty, but you should do so in an exemplary manner. You should love the divine word that is preached to you, you should be assiduous in hearing it, you should relish it, meditate on it, and fear to abuse or neglect it. You should bring others to hear it with you, and you should praise it, if it were

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only to prevent the indifference to which it may be exposed. By this means you will share in the beatitude of those who honor it, for Jesus Christ himself has declared them blessed. When you are unable to be present at sermons, and even when you do assist, you should go to the source of this most holy Word; reading each day in Lent its own gospel, and reading it with respect, with attention and faith, because it is the pure and direct word of the holy Spirit, and because in this sense, the Word of God is still more venerable than that which is announced by the ministry of men.

XI. One of the principal reasons for the institution of Lent is to prepare the faithful for the Paschal communion, and hence you should particularly reflect on this subject, and labor more than ever to purify your conscience by making your confessions with more exactness, and en-

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tering more frequently into yourself, to prove yourself in such a manner that, at the great solemnity of Easter, Jesus Christ may find you more worthy to approach him and his divine mysteries. It would be well you should fix for this purpose, from year to year, a kind of review during Lent, in order to remedy your imperfections and tepidity. By this general confession, made since the last, you would renew yourself, and dispose yourself for the approaching feast, which ought to be a universal renovation for all Christian souls. Again, the most excellent preparation for a worthy communion, is, according to St. Chrysostom communion itself. You cannot prepare yourself better for that of Easter, than by frequent and fervent communions during Lent. This was the reason that in most of the western churches, as we learn from the ancient councils, the faith-

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ful were accustomed to communicate every day in Lent—a custom which St. Charles so eagerly desired to re-establish in the church of Milan, having found no more efficacious means to dispose the people for the Paschal duty than to enjoin the frequentation of the sacraments during Lent. Why, therefore, should I not recommend you the same practice, as I have the same reasons for it, and suppose on your part the same dispositions?

XII. In fine, Lent, as instituted by Christianity, having an entire relation to the great mystery of the Passion of Jesus Christ, which is its end and term, you should be particularly engaged during this holy season, in remembering the sufferings of our Saviour—a remembrance which Jesus Christ expects from you, and in which you cannot fail without a most enormous ingratitude—a remembrance which should be to you of infinite

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value, and which you cannot lose without renouncing the most solid interests of your salvation. It is, I repeat, during this time of Lent that this remembrance should be deeply engraved in your soul, so that at every moment of your life you might be able to cry out: *Ah! Lord, may I sooner forget my right hand, than forget all that you have endured for my sake!* It is then a matter of importance, that you should suffer no day in Lent to pass by without reading in the Evangelists something of the Passion and Death of the Son of God. What miracles of virtue, if you only read with attention, will you there discover! The remembrance of the sufferings of a God will make all the exercises of penance not only tolerable, but amiable; and one of your most pleasing thoughts; and most consoling practices, will be to unite your penance with the penance of Jesus Christ. This was

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the devotion of St. Paul when he said. *I am fastened to the cross with Jesus Christ,* (Galat. ii.,) not separating Christ's cross from his own, and making only one of the two. But to attain this devotion of the great Apostle, the mystery of the Passion must be the most ordinary subject of your considerations and reflections.

XIII. This is the advice I have to offer you, concerning a time that ought to be so precious in your regard. You cannot be too grateful to the goodness of God who bestows you this time, and who wishes to accept the good use you shall make of it, for the remission of your sins. For in this treatment of God there is a twofold mercy, for which you cannot sufficiently bless or thank him. Ah! Lord, should you say to him; what have I done, or how have I deserved that you thus wait for me, and that you should

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thus furnish me with so easy a means of discharging the immense debt which I owe to your justice? You have not wished to destroy me like many millions of others, and far from treating me, as them, with all the rigor of your judgments, you have in some measure forborne your rights in my regard. To how many sinners of both sexes, less culpable than I, have you refused this time of penance, and what proportion is there between this penance which your Church imposes, and all the infidelities of my life? But the more you spare me, O my God, the less will I spare myself; and the more indulgence you show a miserable creature, to enable her to make that just reparation which she owes you, the more severity shall I use, to render you, if not all the glory of which I have deprived you, and which is your due, at least all that it is in my power to procure you. Why have I

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not always been animated with these sentiments? I would not then have listened so much to the thousand pretexts which the spirit of the world, corrupt nature, my own weakness and self-love, have suggested. But if I have not taken advantage of the past, you behold, O Lord, my resolution to let nothing escape of the present or the future, as long as it shall please you to continue my life. Vouchsafe, O my God, to confirm me in this happy resolution, and may your grace, which inspired me to form, also enable me to keep it. Amen.*

But in what does mortification of the flesh consist; and to what is this exercise confined by the practice of the world? Ah, my dear brethren, allow me to tell you, that according to the practice of the world, this virtue is hardly known—that it is despised, nay, that it is looked upon with horror. But no matter what idea

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the world may form of it, the oracle of the Apostle will always endure—that in order to belong to Jesus Christ, and to preserve an inviolable fidelity to him, it is necessary to crucify our flesh, and die to its inordinate passions and desires. *Those who are of Christ, have crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences.* (Galat. v.) No matter what the opinion of the world, it must aver, that the more a sinner is subject to temptation, the more vigorous and strict becomes this law of the mortification of the body. If we were Christians as we ought to be, these rules of the gospel, although general, would be more than sufficient to make us comprehend our duties. But, because self-love rules us, and because in the excess of an indulgence for ourselves, we hardly ever take the trouble of imposing the slightest penance on ourselves—what has the Church done? She has reduced

this general precept to a particular commandment, which is the fast of Lent; justifying herself on the one side by our infirmities, and on the other by our wants—forming her rules after the example of the ancient Patriarchs, and much more on that of Jesus Christ—relying on the power which God has given her, to make laws for the guidance of her children, and promising on our fidelity, that if we have a sincere desire of mortifying our flesh as much as is necessary to overcome temptation, we shall not only experience no rigor in the precept, but shall even do much more than she prescribes; because, in the many temptations which we may experience, even this would not be sufficient to restrain our cupidity, or extinguish the fire of our passions.

This is the design which the Church proposed to herself in the institution of this holy fast. But amongst the small

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number of the faithful who respect the Church, and who seem obedient to her commands, how many are there who change this precept, and by what means? By the false interpretations of corrupt nature; by pretended reasons of necessity; by vain dispensations which they either obtain or grant to themselves. I have said, vain dispensations, and to convince you of this, we have only to consider three great disorders that are connected with these dispensations. The first is, that in general these dispensations seem to be attached to certain conditions in life, and not to individuals; an infallible proof that necessity is not the rule for them. And is it not really surprising, Christians, that when a man in these days is raised to fortune and rank, there is no longer any fasting for him—that then his strength fails, and that neither his constitution nor health will permit

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him to do what he could and would have done in a more humble state of life? In the second place, those who imagine they are most dispensed from the obligation of fasting, are those to whom fasting ought to be most practicable; because they are the rich who abound in every thing, and who enjoy all the comforts of life. In the third place, those who strive most to be exempted from the law of fasting, are those to whom fasting and penance are most necessary; who are not only guilty of many past sins, but who are still enslaved to the habits of sin—who have daily a thousand temptations before them, that render them more subject to relapses, for which they require a remedy.



INSTRUCTIONS
FOR
THE HOLY SEASON
OF
LENT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
OF
PÈRE BOURDALOUE, S. J.



C

"I will bring them into my holy mount, and will make them joyful in my house of prayer; for my house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations."—*Isaiah lvi, 1.*

THE following Stations may be made once a week during the six weeks of Lent, or at any other time of the year, as it may suit the devotion or convenience of the faithful. Those who reside in the country, may visit their own parish church on six successive Sundays, (or any other days that may be convenient,) and there devoutly perform these pious exercises. Great spiritual advantage may be expected from them, as they have been practised from the remotest antiquity in the Church.

x Let all know!

INTRODUCTION.

STATIONS are the venerable remains of the ancient custom of the faithful, who were wont to visit holy places, such as the Tomb of Jesus Christ, the Churches erected over the ashes of the Holy Apostles, or the Oratories in which the memory of the Martyrs was solemnized. Long voyages were often undertaken for these pious purposes. But in process of time X abuses crept in, because mankind will abuse every thing, no matter how sacred. These pilgrimages are now very rarely undertaken, and in their place have been appointed Stations, which pious souls may go through without leaving the place

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of their residence. They visit the temples of the Lord, particularly during the time consecrated to penance, and meditate on various mysteries of religion.

I shall suppose six churches, or chapels, or oratories, which I shall visit successively, in order to renew my fervor, and I will observe the following order:—

First Station. To the Eternal Father, the principle of all good, and the source of all perfection.

Second Station. To the incarnate Word, whose Sacred Heart is all flaming with love for me.

Third Station. To the Holy and Sanctifying Spirit, who has chosen me for his temple, by the divine charity which he has poured out in me.

Fourth Station. To the Blessed Virgin Mary, through whom I have received Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

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Fifth Station. To the Holy Angels, who conduct and support me in the way of salvation.

Sixth Station. To all the Saints in Heaven, by whose example I am animated, and by whose prayers I am assisted.

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FIRST STATION.

TO THE ETERNAL FATHER.

I CONTEMPLATE the Eternal Father creating the world, sending his Son upon the earth, and subjecting this dear Son to death. I recognise in these three great events, the power, the goodness, the infinite justice of my God.

The infinite power of my God in the creation. Who but Omnipotence could have selected this universe amongst an infinity of other worlds which he beheld in his divine essence? Who else could have made that which had no existence,

begin to exist? Who else could have established order and harmony between all the parts of this immense whole, have given light to the stars, fruitfulness to plants, instinct to animals, or formed substances capable of knowledge, reason, and love?

Infinite goodness of my God, in sending his Divine Word, whom he has united to our nature. The world had been lost; it required a deliverer, a legislator, a model. The Incarnate Word has fulfilled this triple function, and the human race sprung up as if a second time from nothing. Grace revived the soul; the germ of immortality was given to the body. The whole man is renewed, enlivened, deified.

Infinite justice of my God, in the sacrifice of his dear Son, the object of his complacency. It was necessary that man should make satisfaction for his sin; this,

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of himself, he was unable to do. Sin, in its malice, is of a superior order, because it outrages an infinite majesty. This divine justice, whose rights surpass all any understanding, hath stricken the Man-God, and the satisfaction is complete, superabundant, and infinite.

O God, infinite in your power, in your goodness, in your justice! who am I that I should meditate upon so many wonders in your presence? You have but spoken, and all the beings that fill this universe started into existence. I do not presume to fathom this abyss of power, this force of operation, which transcends all the conceptions of angels and men. If I should ask Moses, with St. Augustine, to reveal to me more clearly the origin of things, he would reply only as he has written, GOD CREATED EVERY THING AND EVERY THING THAT HE CREATE WAS VERY GOOD. But what affects me

and fills me with a profound respect for your adorable Majesty is, that all these creatures, the work of your hands, although far removed from you, because they are finite, are nevertheless in you, and you always in them. The heavens and the earth do not contain you, because you are infinite, but you contain them in your immensity. You are the union of every thing in existence, and you exist only in yourself. Yes, my God, even whilst prostrate at your feet, I form some desires of approaching you, you are already within me. Alas! nothing ought to be more familiar to me than the exercise of your holy presence; but my dissipation, my levity, my passions raise up a wall of separation between you and me. This unspeakable mystery of Jesus Christ ought at least, O Lord, to induce me to be united to you. By Jesus Christ, and with Jesus Christ, I have contracted

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with you an alliance that is entirely divine. You dwell yourself in inaccessible light; but Jesus Christ, my divine Mediator, takes me, as if by the hand, and leads me into this sanctuary. You are a hidden God to the Jews and the Gentiles; but you reveal yourself to Christians, because they are the brethren of Jesus Christ, and the heirs of your kingdom. Why, then, should I live in any thing but in you, since I ought to live, like the Apostle, through Jesus Christ, and in Jesus Christ? Ah! if I do not adhere to this bond of my alliance with you, I ought to fear all the scourges of your justice. Jesus Christ has made atonement for me; but I will not derive the fruit of his atonement if I be always far from him and from you. Jesus Christ immolated for me, teaches me how to reconcile your infinite goodness with your infinite justice, and by this means I triumph over

all the vain reasoning of the impious. But will it suffice me not to be incredulous, if I be tepid and inconstant in your service; if I do not profit by the miracles of your goodness and justice, if Jesus Christ on Calvary do not teach me that I no longer belong to myself but to you? I pour forth tears at your feet, O God of all majesty! and I conjure you by the sacred wounds of my Redeemer, to unite me to yourself alone, to you who have created me, redeemed me, and imprinted upon me the seal of divine adoption. At the moment of my death, the minister of the Church will tell my soul to depart in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in the name of this adorable Trinity, to whom I owe every thing. Ah! may I, at that moment, flee from the world and from myself to take refuge in you, O thrice holy God! May there be no other change at

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my death, except that which will deliver me from this earthly habitation, and transport me into the region of the living! May I then be able to say—My Creator and my God, I have always lived in you, and for your sake; receive my soul, and place it in your bosom for ever, with Jesus Christ and with all your saints. Amen

SECOND STATION.

TO THE INCARNATE WORD.

I present myself in this station before the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ, all flaming with love for me. It was love that produced the Incarnation of the divine word, and it was by love that this divine word made flesh accomplished the work of my redemption.

Behold the origin and the foundation of the devotion of the faithful to the

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Heart of Jesus. There are two relations in this devotion; one to the Heart of Jesus itself, as being one of the principal parts of the adorable body of Jesus Christ; the other to the love which this divine Saviour has entertained and still entertains for us.

This love affects his heart in a lively degree, and it is this affection which I particularly honor whilst I also render to this Heart the worship that is due to the entire body of the Man-God. These notions are most simple and most easily comprehended. The object of my devotion is the material Heart of Jesus Christ, as forming a portion of his adorable body; the object of my devotion is at the same time the love of Jesus Christ as forming the most lively impressions upon this heart. It was necessary, I imagine, to establish these principles in order to vindicate a most solid devotion, a

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devotion which is imperfectly explained by some and most unjustly attacked by others.

Ah! Lord, I perceive that your sacred heart has been at all times an object of veneration to the faithful. At all times have they adored your body inseparably united to your divinity, and consequently adored your sacred heart which forms one of its principal parts. In every age have they been affected by the unspeakable love which has produced in your heart emotions far superior in strength and in dignity to those which the most ardent and legitimate love could produce in our hearts.

I present myself before this heart which is wounded and inflamed with love. Ah Lord! there was no faith in you because you behold all the mysteries in the bosom of your heavenly Father; hope was not in you because, you enjoy per-

petually the immediate vision of God. But you were all love and you have come on earth for the sole purpose of enkindling and diffusing this sacred fire. O love! what characters do I perceive in you!

A TENDER LOVE: Jesus pours forth tears over the ungrateful sinners who reject his benefits, who despise his visits and the salvation which he offers them.

A VEHEMENT LOVE: Jesus was to be baptized in a baptism of blood, he longed for the moment when it was to take place, and complained that his sacrifice was deferred for a short time.

A GENEROUS LOVE: Jesus possessed all the riches of heaven and earth; and he made himself poor in order to enrich men; he almost annihilated himself to raise them to the highest degree of glory.

A UNIVERSAL LOVE: Jesus has excluded none from the price of his sacri-

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fice; he offered it even for those who shed his blood to the last drop.

A CONSTANT LOVE: Jesus came into the world only to love; he conversed with men only to teach them to love; he died only to show them what it is to love; and he is their advocate now in glory only that they may be able to love.

A PATIENT LOVE: Jesus waits for us in spite of our ingratitude; he does not lose sight of us even in our greatest wanderings but eagerly seeks us.

AN EFFICACIOUS LOVE: Jesus, loving even unto death, has triumphed over sin, death, and hell.

A POWERFUL LOVE: Jesus performs the most wonderful miracles in order to dwell with us, to make us live by his life by nourishing us with his own substance.

AN IMMENSE LOVE: Jesus in his love has comprehended all time, from the creation to the end of the world; all

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generations have shared in his love, because all stood in need of being washed in his blood.

THE LOVE OF A FATHER, OF A BROTHER, OF A FRIEND, OF A PROTECTOR, OF A SHEPHERD, OF A MEDIATOR: Jesus bears all these names and he eternally performs their various functions, because his love, like himself, is eternal.

What shall I say, O my God! and how can I penetrate the depth of the love with which this heart is inflamed? The Apostle desired that all the faithful should comprehend this holy charity, which is so far above all human understanding.* I perceive his meaning: he knew that my spirit would never arrive at that fullness of light which revealed to him the extent of thy love, O divine Saviour! but he wished that all our faculties should be devoted to this ineffable

* Ephes. iii. 19.

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love; that we should be **CONFIRMED** and **ENGRAFTED** in this love, so that every other knowledge should appear unworthy of our attention.

May I therefore, O Lord, learn to-day this science of your love! May it produce in me two effects necessary to salvation—a forgetfulness of myself, and an entire confidence in you! May I be buried in this ocean of love, in order that the world and my passions may not find me any more, and that I may prepare myself in this life to praise and bless you in a blissful eternity. Amen.

THIRD STATION.

TO THE HOLY GHOST.

THERE are, in the Sacred Scriptures. two remarkable accounts of the Holy Ghost. The first is that after the crea-

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tion, the Spirit of God moved over the waters, and imparted fruitfulness to all those things which, in the successive order of God's works, were to fill and adorn this world. The second is that after the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, and qualified them to discharge the functions of their ministry. Behold two creations, that of the world, and that of the Church. On both, the Holy Ghost pours forth his vivifying influence. He animates, he strengthens, he becomes, as it were, the soul of the two worlds—the one sensible and material, the other invisible and spiritual. I understand on one side, that if matter could not move of itself, by a much stronger reason it would be incapable of producing in me the principle of thought; and on the other, that if the Church required the influence of the Holy Ghost, in order to

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become the mother of the children of God, it is impossible for me, without the influence of the same Divine Spirit, to be born of God, to live for God, or to enter, at the close of my life, into the bosom of God. O what light, what extent, what unction in those two truths! Every thing that I am, whether as a rational being or as a Christian, depends upon them.

O Holy Spirit! source of all fruitfulness, of all action, of all sanctity, I prostrate myself in thy presence, and avow, with shame, my ignorance and ingratitude. I have known that you are one of the three Divine Persons; that you proceed from all eternity from the two first; that you are the substantial and infinite love of the Father and the Son; that as the Father sees himself in his Word, and has in him the knowledge of all existing and possible beings, so he loves himself in you, O Divine Spirit! and he loves in you

every thing that is good, holy, and amiable. But I have not considered that every thing which exists in the universe has received from you activity, strength, motion, and beauty. O God! inanimate creatures, and those that are deprived of understanding, proclaim your operation by the different functions which they perform in this world; and creatures endowed with reason incessantly publish, by the exercise of their faculties, the excellence of your gifts. But what is more; our souls, when adorned with grace, are your temple. You dwell in them with complacency, you unite them to the Father and the Son, you are the principle and bond of the divine adoption, you are the pledge of their right to the inheritance of heaven.

O ineffable mystery! God has twice communicated himself to our nature, all weak and limited as it is. First, in giving

it his only Son; and secondly, in pouring his Holy Spirit upon it. Jesus Christ has redeemed us by his blood, and the Holy Ghost has sanctified us by his gifts. Jesus Christ has purchased the Church by delivering himself for it, and the Holy Ghost has formed it by instructing it, by strengthening it, and by extending it even to the extremities of the earth. JESUS CHRIST IS OUR ADVOCATE WITH HIS FATHER,* and the HOLY GHOST PRAYETH in us and FOR US, WITH UNSPEAKABLE GROANINGS.† Jesus Christ feeds us with his adorable flesh, and the Holy Ghost makes us experience the life of love in this heavenly nourishment.

O love! O precious gift of the Divine Spirit! What would we be without love? What would we be without you, O holy Spirit? Dreadful truth! Love is in heaven, and forms the happiness of the

* 1 John ii. 1.

† Rom. viii. 26.

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saints; love is on earth, and consoles the friends of God; but love is not in hell, and hence the devils and the reprobate who dwell there, are filled with despair. Spirit of my God! you are in this place of darkness and horror by your power and your justice, but you are not there by your love. One spark of your divine charity would extinguish all the fires of the abyss, and change this darksome prison into a place of delights. Ah! when I had the misfortune to lose you, O holy Spirit, I could still, by the tears of penance, animated by your grace, recall you to my heart; and you did not disdain to bestow me your favors, and to forget my wanderings. But in hell there are no more visits of the Holy Ghost, no other return of charity, no more love, no more love for ever, and consequently there are eternal regrets, eternal gnashing of teeth, eternal bitterness of heart.

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At this reflection, O divine Spirit! I am seized with a mortal fear; to lose you for ever, and to lose with you the hope of loving you! But what shall I do, O consoling Spirit! in order to deliver myself from so great a misfortune? The Apostle has defied all things, present and future, to be able to ever separate him from you.* I dare not use the same language, because I feel my weakness and my inconstancy; but I offer you my heart, in order that you may entirely and for ever possess it. In my hands, this heart, which is so feeble, would be badly regulated; I have lost it numberless times; for it is losing it to separate it from you, O spirit of my God! May it henceforth belong to you! Wound it with one of those darts with which you have pierced the hearts of your saints; burn it with one of those tongues of fire

* Rom. ¹iii. 35.

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which you poured out on the Apostles; inebriate it with that delicious wine, which the Spouse of the Canticles tasted in the cellar of the bridegroom. May I be all love for you alone, and may all false loves disappear at your presence, O eternal Love, who reignest with the Word, in the bosom of the Father, and who will not cease to reign for ever and ever!

FOURTH STATION.

TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

WE do not sufficiently know the holy Mother of God. Perhaps we have some devotion towards her; but, besides this, very little idea of her grandeur or merit. Methinks there are three things that ought to attach us to her, and inspire us with great confidence in her interces-

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1
sion. **FIRST**—The happiness which she enjoyed of conversing with Jesus Christ for thirty years. **SECOND**—The silence which the Evangelists have observed on the most of her actions. **THIRD**—The sentiments contained in her admirable Canticle.

We sometimes wish to have lived at the time when Jesus Christ appeared in the world. We imagine that we would have been amongst the number of his admirers and faithful disciples. Mary heard from his mouth, during thirty years, the words of life. What effects did not so intimate a union produce in this holy soul! To what degree of contemplation did she not arrive! What knowledge did she not acquire of the mysteries of God!

We are sometimes surprised that the Evangelists have related so little concerning this blessed creature. This is

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what constitutes her glory; she lived in retreat, intent upon what she learned in the school of her Son. The saints are never more worthy of admiration than when few of their actions are recorded. It is a proof that they have led hidden lives, and concealed their virtues, which is the heroism of the saints. Mary excelled in this point: she treasured up every thing in her heart, according to the expression of the Evangelist.* Men are unworthy to enter this sanctuary where the Divinity had formed with us such intimate unions.

We have a hundred times recited the Canticle of the Blessed Virgin, but have not comprehended its hidden meaning. It is every thing that faith, humility, and gratitude could produce in the most perfect degree. Let us for the future meditate upon it, and learn from the very lips

* Luke II. 19.

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of this Holy Mother of God what we ought to be.

① Sacred Virgin in whom the Word was made flesh, I implore your holy protection for the Church to which you have given Jesus Christ, for all those who do not yet know God the Saviour, the object of your tenderness; for careless and indifferent Christians who have little knowledge of you, because they know not Jesus Christ, or know him imperfectly; in fine, for myself, who desire sincerely to belong to Jesus Christ. To whom could I more properly confide my interests or entrust my sentiments than to you? You were the depositary of the secrets of the Most High. Obtain for me the gift of a lively faith in these unhappy times when the number of the true faithful is so limited. Obtain for me some degrees of that profound humility which formed your character. May I desire, in imita-

tion of you, to be unknown to the world, and profoundly humbled before God. You had all the titles that could distinguish a pure creature, and they served only to make you understand more clearly the advantage of being nothing in the presence of the Supreme Being. I, on the contrary, have deserved to be the reproach of the world, and yet I forget myself so far as to covet its esteem. May your example instruct and humble me. In fine, obtain for me the love of Jesus Christ your Son, and the happiness to die in pronouncing his Holy Name and yours. Amen.

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FIFTH STATION.

TO THE HOLY ANGELS.

THE author of the Epistle attributed to St. Barnabas says that there are in this world two ways; THAT OF DARKNESS over which the devils preside, and the WAY OF LIGHT in which the Holy Angels are the guides. This thought, contained in the most ancient monument of ecclesiastical history is most conformable to the whole doctrine of the scriptures and inspires me with a great confidence in the protection of the holy angels. I cannot think of the way OF DARKNESS in which the devils lead so many souls astray without being seized with fear and touched with compassion. O how broad is the way! How it is filled with men of every state, of every age, of every profession, of every character! That which is shown

me by the holy angels is a narrow way and little frequented. This is not the fault of those holy guides. They are zealous for our salvation and never abandon us until the moment eternity begins. We afflict them when we fail to profit by their care of us; we are inexcusable when we do not implore their assistance.

O angels of the Lord! I present myself at the entrance of those two ways; the one guarded by the powers of darkness, the other pointed out by you to all the children of God. I make no hesitation in my choice of those two roads; I wish to enter upon that which you point out, but I enter on it with my weaknesses, my passions, my ignorance, my tepidity. O celestial intelligences, who unceasingly burn with divine love! you know well how my heart is not inflamed with those holy ardors which penetrate you; and nevertheless it is by love I

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must be sustained in the career of salvation; obtain for me a spark of that ineffable charity which gives wings to fervent souls. You have combated the infernal legions and you have overcome them. You remain in possession of light, whilst the only advantage they have derived from their revolt is the necessity of being for ever in darkness. Ah! how I desire to be united to you in that region which is for ever illuminated with the splendor of God and of the divine Lamb that was slain for me! Beg of Jesus Christ, who is essential light, a ray of his all-powerful grace, of that grace which enlightens the spirit and moves the heart; which strengthens faith, sustains hope, and continually feeds the flame of charity, Take me this day under your protection, and share with me the dangers of the journey on which it is so easy and so dangerous to fall. Angels of the Eter-

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nal, do not abandon me, grievous sinner though I am: contend for me against the enemy of my salvation, and at the moment of my death receive my soul and transplant it into the bosom of life which is Jesus Christ who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

SIXTH STATION.

TO THE SAINTS.

THE Saints have prayed on earth for their fellow-creatures. It would be absurd to say that in glory they pray for them no longer. The Church militant has always placed confidence in their intercession; and the honor which we pay them at this day is nothing in comparison to what they received from the primitive Church. None, therefore, but the spirit of error could have sought to de-

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prive us of this holy practice. I revere it with a lively sentiment of joy, confidence, and consolation. I address myself to you, O holy friends of God, and I lay before you my necessities and my vows. You reign in glory, after having combated on earth. I am still fighting, but with much less courage than you. It is this courage, this zeal for my salvation which I desire, and which I ask of Jesus Christ our Lord, through your powerful intercession. Those amongst you whose history I have read, have inspired me with a holy emulation, because I have there seen that in frail bodies, and in the midst of the dangers of the world, they have made an excellent use of grace and of time. Those of whose particular actions I am ignorant, did not appear to me less worthy of admiration. They have sanctified themselves in silence; they have concealed from the eyes of men the treasures

of grace which they possessed. Every thing in you is an instruction and an example to me, O holy inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem! Look upon me with a propitious eye; offer in my behalf, your merits, which are the gifts of Jesus Christ; this divine Saviour cannot but acknowledge them. Protect me by your prayers against the enemies of my salvation. Those who enjoyed eternal bliss before you, did not abandon you; they were your friends and your intercessors. Perform the same function in my regard, O holy Patriarchs, O holy Prophets, O holy Apostles, O holy Martyrs, O holy Confessors, O holy Virgins, in order that I may one day share in your happiness. Amen.





AN EXPOSITION
OF THE
LAMENTATIONS
OF THE
PROPHET JEREMIAS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

PÈRE BERTHIER, S. J.





MOORE'S ALFA

NO. 10

THE ALFA LITHOGRAPH

NO. 11

"O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like
to my sorrow."

MOORE'S ALFA LITHOGRAPH

NO.

THE ALFA LITHOGRAPH



LAMENTATIONS

OF THE

PROPHET JEREMY

THE Prophet has described in his lamentations: 1. The state of Jerusalem, at the time of the Babylonish captivity. 2. Its condition after the conquest of the Romans. 3. The state of a soul deprived of the grace of God. 4. The state of the reprobate in hell. 5. The state of the just in humiliations, persecutions, and sufferings. The four last objects are not direct and immediate like the first; but all the characters are well suited to explain every thing in them that is essential or

LAMENTATIONS OF THE

important. We may call the three last spiritual, or allegorical, but they are not less adapted to edify the reader.

I undertake to make some reflections on this beautiful part of the Holy Scriptures; and I do so, O Lord! without any assistance from human learning, and shall be guided by the sole desire of improving myself and exciting myself, under the direction of your grace, to sentiments and works of penance. Enlighten me with your inspirations; speak rather to my heart than to my spirit. And you, O holy Prophet! who have suffered so much for justice sake; you, of whom it is written that you "tenderly loved your brethren, and frequently prayed for your people," (Maccab. xv. 14,) obtain for me the grace to understand this divine book, and some of those secret emotions with which you were filled, when you composed it!

PROPHET JEREMY.

CHAPTER I.*

THESE lamentations are a variety of pictures, which were intended to acquaint us with the calamities of Jerusalem, and the prayers which the Prophet and the city itself address to God, to obtain the conversion and deliverance of the people of Israel. There is more feeling, than method, in this composition; and I wish also that my work should be considered as the effect of feeling, rather than as one connected and regularly arranged.

* This first chapter, the second, and the fourth contain each twenty-two verses, corresponding with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the third chapter there are sixty-six verses, three for each letter. The fifth has also twenty-two verses, but is not marked with the letters of the alphabet, as the foregoing. It is most probable that these lamentations were composed as a poem, and that in order to assist the memory, the lines were thus adapted to the Hebrew letters. The Church has retained the order of the letters both in the Bible and the Divine Office.

LAMENTATIONS OF THE

1. ALEPH.—*How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people? How is the mistress of the Gentiles become as a widow—the princess of provinces made tributary?*

Jerusalem was rendered eminent above the nations, not by rights or authority, but by the beauty of her temple and the splendor of the true worship. When she fell a prey to the Chaldeans, she was reduced to complete solitude; her temple was destroyed—her people were carried into captivity. This was the first catastrophe, but it was, after all, only a figure and shadow of the second, under the Emperor Titus, which entirely scattered this perfidious nation.

I represent to myself, O Lord! a soul favored with your gifts, adorned with sanctifying grace, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, rich in merits, and abundant in good works. She wanders from your paths—she delivers herself up to the

world, your enemy—she abandons herself to the fury of her passions—and what does she become at this moment? She is *like a solitary*, because she is deprived of the charms of your holy presence; like a *widow*, because she is stripped of the protection of her heavenly spouse; like a *tributary* of the devil, because she is dependent on this cruel and imperious master. O God! what changes in this soul, that was once the object of your complacency!

2. BETH.—*Weeping, she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; there is none to comfort her among all them that were dear to her: all her friends have despised her, and are become her enemies.*

Behold an image of what passes every day in the world. Adversity produces ingratitude and enmity; there are then no more consolers—no more feeling hearts. The Hebrew text heightens the picture

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by saying, that these false friends *have acted in a perfidious manner* to Jerusalem. O truth! which every age demonstrates, and which experience more clearly proves, especially with regard to those societies or friendships that are founded on pleasure, and maintained for some time by interest or crime. The hour will come when these pretended friends will despise and revile their dissolute companions. When these men who are addicted to mischief, meet with adversity, or are reduced to a state of illness, they have none to console them—all forsake their friendship. But, O Lord! this oracle of the Prophet is accomplished, in a still more fatal manner, in the reprobate. Eternal tears, infinite despair, profound desolation, legions of enemies, cutting and fruitless remorse—what an unhappy lot! O God, preserve me from the horrors of so late and so useless a repentance! Grant me a com-

punction that will place me at once in the road to life. I do not ask the consolations of the world; I only beg, O Lord, that the light of your countenance should shine upon me. I defy the contempt of the world, provided you reckon me amongst the number of your servants and friends.

3. GHIMEL.—*Juda hath removed her dwelling-place because of her affliction, and the greatness of her bondage; she hath dwelt among the nations, and she hath found no rest; all her persecutors have taken her in the midst of straits.*

The Prophet wishes to declare, that the affliction of Juda and its numberless miseries were the cause of its falling under the sword of the enemy, and of being led into captivity. Jerusalem was unfortunate in the two sieges, (one under Nebuchadonazor, and the other under Titus,) which ended in her destruction.

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She lived under cruel and imperious masters; she became a prey to tyrants. She was therefore obliged to yield to the force of her enemies from without. Her people were reduced to slavery, and their persecutors made them continually experience the rigors of captivity.

What is all this, but a soul that is humbled by the sight of her crimes, and so unfortunate as obstinately to neglect seeking the Lord? She becomes at length the slave of the devil and of her passions, who leave her no rest, and who pursue her without ceasing. Ah! my God, how this word of your Prophet, *Juda hath removed her dwelling-place*, strikes me, when I apply it to a guilty soul, who goes out of this life to enter into the eternal slavery of the devil. This unhappy soul *hath removed her dwelling-place*, and henceforth she shall enjoy neither rest nor consolations; her

executioners shall unceasingly torment her; they will afford her neither the hope of a better condition, nor the means of re-entering the way of bliss. O, my Saviour! this reprobate soul *hath changed her dwelling-place*; from that bed of pain, on which she has left the sad remains of her mortality, she has gone before your tribunal, and from thence to the flames, which you have prepared for Satan and his accomplices. She *hath removed her dwelling-place*, charged with your precious blood which she has profaned, and which cries for vengeance against her. She still bears the sacred character of divine adoption, of that holy baptism which she has dishonored, and during all eternity she will mourn over the abuse of your benefits. Melancholy departure!—yes, the ruin of an entire world is not at all so frightful as the catastrophe of a soul which you have doomed to vengeance.

4. DALETH.—*The ways of Sion mourn, because there are none that come to the solemn feast; all her gates are broken down; her priests sigh; her virgins are in affliction, and she is oppressed with bitterness.*

This was the state of Jerusalem in her two captivities; and it is the condition of a soul that is in disgrace with God. The good emotions which she still feels, reclaim against the abandonment of holy exercises. The entrances of this soul—all her senses are without defence or bulwark. The ministers of religion weep over her wanderings—modesty, which was so long respected, loses her rights, and there remains nothing but bitterness within her. The pleasures of the world are insipid—ambition fatigues her—the fear of death terrifies her—the maladies of the body afflict her—the accidents which so frequently oppose her desires, irritate her. Ah, Lord! this holy Sion, in whom you were so well

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pleased, is no longer aught but the centre of trouble and confusion. I behold it on the point of destruction—and why? Because you have abandoned it; for according to the beautiful reflection of one of your saints, “You destroy a heart when you abandon it, and you create it when you fill it.” (*St. Gregory the Great*) Dreadful abandonment, which made St. Chrysostom say, that we should weep more over a soul that is deprived of God’s grace, than Jeremy did over the ruins of the temple at Jerusalem.

5. HE.—*Her adversaries are become her lords—her enemies are enriched, because the Lord hath spoken against her for the multitude of her iniquities; her children are led into captivity before the face of the oppressor.*

That is, they have been scattered like herds before the enemy, that has become their master. All these characters belong to unhappy Jerusalem. She became the

pray of the Chaldeans first, and of the
 Romans afterwards, because her crimes
 had compelled the Lord *to speak against*
her. Terrible expression, O my God!
 When is it that you *speak* definitively and
 irrevocably *against* the sinner? It is at
 the hour of death; and then all the en-
 emies of salvation domineer over this un-
 fortunate soul, and enrich themselves with
 her spoils. They drive before them, as
 it were, all her powers and all her faculties
 —they reduce all to slavery. Pitiless
 masters! it is sin that arms them, and
 gives them all their strength; they be-
 hold sin in a reprobate soul, and they
 avenge upon her the rights of God which
 she has compromised, and the blood of
 Jesus Christ which she has profaned. Sin,
 therefore, is the first executioner of the
 reprobate; sin, whose charms have passed
 away, whose remorse endures, and whose
 punishment is eternal. “Unhappy wretch-

es that we are," said St. Augustine, "we leave behind us at our death the objects for which we have sinned, and we bring with us sin itself which serves only to plunge us into despair."

6. VAU.—*And from the daughter of Sion all her beauty is departed; her princes are become like rams that find no pasture, and they are gone away without strength before the face of the pursuer.*

The beauty of a state consists in the good order of all the bodies that compose it, and in the good government of those who are placed in authority. Jerusalem, was nothing but a chaos of confusion during her two great calamities. The princes knew not how to govern, and they had not sufficient power to exact obedience. They fell like the other citizens into the hands of their conquerors, and they were led like slaves into a strange land.

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O Lord! what do you behold in the soul of a hardened sinner? What disorder—what confusion—what baseness! Her faculties, which were destined to govern, are surrendered to those passions which domineer over them, which bind them down, and render it almost impossible for them to see or to practise what is good; this is the beginning of reprobation. In hell, nothing is more hideous than a soul accursed by God: her powers are all wasted; the understanding no longer sees any thing but evil; the will is obstinate in crime; the memory in torment, from the recollection of the past; the imagination beset by frightful images. All is degraded and unnatural in the soul, that was heretofore created after the image of God, and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

7. ZAIN.—*Jerusalem hath remembered the days of her affliction, and prevarication*

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of all her desirable things, which she had from the days of old, when her people fell in the enemy's hand, and there was no helper; the enemies have seen her, and have mocked at her sabbaths.

The force of this verse consists in the comparison which Jerusalem makes between the days of her affliction, and the days of her prosperity and glory. This is but a figure of the despair which agonizes the reprobate in hell. He remembers the graces which he had received from his God, and the manner he abused them. He has a clear view for ever before his eyes of the facilities which he enjoyed of working out his salvation. Henceforth there is no more time for him—no more means—no further resource in the divine mercy. The titles of Christian, child of God, creature destined for eternal bliss—the character of baptism, the honor to which he was raised by receiving the

sacrament of Jesus Christ, all the graces, and holy inspirations which he received, all become objects of contempt and insult to his demon persecutors.

Ah! Lord, in the faults which I have committed against prudence, or civility, or decency, or my own civil or private interest, what I am most grieved to remember is the facility which I had of avoiding them. How dreadful, therefore, will not those recollections be if I shall have the misfortune of dying a reprobate? I will be carried back in spirit to those advantageous moments and happy circumstances in which I could so easily and effectually have insured my salvation. Then I will turn on myself, and I will see that through my own fault I have abused every thing, that there is neither time nor opportunity left me, and that I am abandoned to eternal despair. O God! this is the worm that never dies, with which you threaten

us in your holy Gospel. I could have acted, and I did not. I could have prayed, and I neglected this necessary practice. I could have subdued such or such a passion, and I allowed it to gain an ascendance over me. I could have renounced dangerous companies, and I have sought after them. I could have borne the various trials of life, and I revolted against Providence who permitted them. I could have told the Lord every moment that I loved him, and I have spent a long life without remembering this great and delightful commandment. I could have been a saint like so many others who are in glory; I had even more assistance than many of them to arrive at a high degree of perfection, and I made no account of these examples, of these motives of grace, of all I had heard or read of the mercies and vengeance of the Lord. I am therefore lost, because I willed it. I have

taken great pains to destroy myself. Oh! if any time still remained for me, no penance would seem too rigorous, no desert too frightful, no privations too great, no good work too excessive. Useless regrets! There remains nought for me but a recollection which drives me to despair, an eternal reprobation which admits no remedy, nor comfort, nor mitigation, I am, and shall be for ever miserable.

8. HETH.—*Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore is she become unstable: all that honored her have despised her, because they have seen her shame; but she sighed and turned backward, in order to weep.*

The Prophet compares Jerusalem to an abandoned and dishonored female. All those who had respected her, despised her, and she had nothing but tears for her portion. A sinner who has advanced the first steps in iniquity, seldom recedes. He wanders from crime to crime, and

proceeds to such lengths as to disgrace himself before an honest and virtuous public. Even libertines themselves frequently despise him, and there remains nothing for him but shame and remorse. O Lord, I behold in guilty and sorrowful Jerusalem, what the force of conscience is, when it cries out in favor of your holy law. This conscience is a secret witness, or rather a severe judge, who registers, in his terrible book, all the misdeeds of the sinner. At your tribunal, O my God! this witness will speak with an eloquence which no power nor artifice can silence or subdue. The picture of our life will be exhibited in all its details. A thousand things which escape our notice will be fully revealed; a thousand secret intentions, with which we do not reproach ourselves will be disclosed in all their malice and in all their odious relations. O Lord! judge me in this life; let loose

against me those enemies who will reduce me to the same state as Jerusalem after the Chaldean conquest. Do not defer until the day of judgment, that severity which I have so often deserved. May I weep here below, in order that I may not shed unavailing tears for all eternity.

9. TEPH.—*Her filthiness is on her feet, and she hath not remembered her end: she is wonderfully cast down, not having a comforter: behold, O Lord, my affliction, because the enemy is lifted up.*

Jeremy intends to say that the filthiness of this city, which has been compared to an abandoned female, is so notorious, that it has extended to *her feet*, or, as the Hebrew has it, *to the extremity of her garment*, so that every one may observe it. The reason of this filthiness is, that she has lost sight of her latter end, that is, the evils which threaten her. Hence, the ex-

treme desolation into which she has fallen. The Prophet then puts into her mouth a prayer of confidence and of conversion to the Lord. This is what befalls the sinner, especially the dying sinner who is abandoned by his friends and neighbors. Although he is plunged in the abyss of iniquity, the Church and her Pastors still suggest to him sentiments of penance. It is his last resource whilst he is yet on earth. Happy if he profits by it! But, O my God, when Jerusalem was admonished by your prophet, she was not converted; and how few dying sinners re-enter the way of Justice!

10. JOD.—*The enemy hath put out his hand at all her desirable things: for she hath seen the Gentiles enter into her sanctuary, of whom thou gavest commandment that they should not enter into thy Church.*

It was a great consternation to Jerusalem during her two sieges, to see the

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Gentiles enter the holy place to ravage and profane it. It was then her grief became extreme. If we possess faith, we shall behold something more lamentable in a soul that loses the grace of God. The enemy of salvation invades this sanctuary, and banishes therefrom the Holy Ghost and all the gifts of sanctifying grace. This unhappy soul is then in a state of death. For according to the remark of St. Augustine, a reflection on which we should frequently meditate, (*Serm.* 62,) "God is the life of the soul, as the soul is the life of the body; as the body expires when it loses the soul, so the soul dies when it loses God; the departure of the soul is the death of the body, and the departure of God is the death of the soul. O how many deaths, (adds the Holy Father,) in the intercourse of life!"

11. CAPH.—*All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given all their precious*

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things for food to relieve the soul : see O Lord, and consider, for I am become vile.

This verse paints the extreme misery of the citizens of Jerusalem during the two sieges. They were reduced to a famine, of which history gives such an account as to fill us with horror. A still further image of the state of a sinner who is tormented by his conscience. He everywhere seeks peace, it is the nourishment which he wants, and which he would purchase at any price, however dear. His misfortune is, to fail and to lose himself in those pretended consolations which only give him more trouble. He abandons himself to frivolous pleasures which soon depart, he is amused with trifles which render him contemptible. He struggles against two enemies which tyrannize over him—his conscience and time : his conscience which observes all his ways, and sounds all the depths of his heart ; time,

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which presses on him like an enormous load. His conscience, which reproaches him for every moment that is badly spent; and time, which he loves and from which he flies, whose loss he dreads, and of whose worth he is ignorant. Ah, Lord! what sorrowful days does a soul spend which has wandered from your ways! She suffers a continual hunger, because you leave her the secret desire of your presence, which is the nourishment of spirits; and this soul is never satisfied, because she runs after objects that are incapable of satiating her.

12. LAMED.—*O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow: for he hath made a vintage of me as the Lord spoke in the day of his fierce anger.*

Jerusalem in the excess of her misery invites strangers, and those who pass by, to contemplate her sorrow. The Lord

hath threatened her, and his threats have been effectual; the enemy has ravaged and laid her waste. An example for all impenitent sinners. They must expect a deplorable end, a sorrow, continual and without redress. This beautiful passage which the Church applies to Jesus Christ in his passion should make us fear and meditate upon the lot of the reprobate in hell. If Jesus Christ has submitted to the torments of the cross for mankind, how shall they be treated if they despise this holy passion? What shall be the despair of a damned soul when it will make these reflections, (and is it possible that it will not make them?) I had a Redeemer who had written my name in heaven, in characters traced by his own blood. He had merited for me the pardon of my sins, by means which conferred on this pardon an infinite value. He had lavished for my sake his repose, his honor, and his life;

and yet I am lost, and this precious blood will ever cry out for vengeance against me. O profound sorrow, O grief of despair!

13. MEM.—*From above he hath sent fire into my bones, and hath instructed me.* he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back; he hath made me desolate, wasted with sorrow all the day long.*

God, in the height of his vengeance against Jerusalem, suffered her enemies in the two sieges to carry fire even to the interior of the temple; and to consume the entire of that beautiful edifice. In this sense the fire *domineers* and rages in the very *bones* of Jerusalem, according to the Hebrew text. This chastisement in-

* For *hath instructed me*, *erudit me*, as we read in the Vulgate, the Hebrew text is, *this fire hath ruled over me*. This difference arises from the similarity of the letters which form the two Hebrew verbs, *to domineer*, and *to instruct*. It is probable the writer of the Vulgate had more correct Hebrew copies than any now extant, but either of the readings will preserve good sense.

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structed this rebellious city, at least during the time that followed her first desolation under Nabuchadonosor; for from that period, the Jews no longer abandoned themselves to idolatry; and thus the reading of the Vulgate is justified.

In this life God admonishes the sinner by scourges and tribulations; these trials are the causes of his conversion, if he knows how to profit by them. But if he remains obdurate, this heavenly teaching will only serve for his greater condemnation. It is in hell particularly, that the fire penetrates *even to the bones*; it is there it *domineers* as a sovereign, there also it *instructs*, but this instruction is too late, and serves only to aggravate the misery of the reprobate. Ah, Lord! *send fire into my interior*, but let it be the fire of your love; and if you subject me to *the fire* of tribulation, may *this fire instruct me!* may *the snares spread under my feet*

excite my vigilance; may the bitter sorrow with which you have drenched me, work out my entire conversion!

14. NUN.—*The yoke of my iniquities hath watched; they are folded together in his hand, and put upon my neck; my strength is weakened; the Lord hath delivered me.*

Jerusalem here says, by the mouth of the Prophet, that she is cursed by the weight of her iniquities because they are always present to her memory; for this is what is meant by *the yoke that watches*. The Lord has coiled it up as it were, into immense folds, which press upon her shoulders; she has no strength to bear it, and moreover she is a captive in the hands of an enemy. Behold an image of a conscience loaded with crimes, tied down and pinioned by the powers of darkness; at the hour of death this is a weight that crushes the sinner, a labyrinth which he cannot unravel, he has hardly any longer

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the use of his faculties; he has nothing around him but the world which is vanishing, his passions which domineer over him, and the devils who wait for the moment to carry off their prey; the light of the sun, of justice shines faintly on his eyes, and he has not been wont to recognize its consoling and purifying ray. This faithless man enters into an eternity, upon which he has never reflected: he passes into a world where he knows no one to receive him. O Lord! the tears of Jeremy are insufficient to deplore the misfortune of this soul; you reveal it to me still more in the following verse, for the comprehension of which I humbly beseech you.

15. SAMECH.—*The Lord hath taken away all my mighty men out of the midst of me; he hath called against me, the time to destroy my chosen men; the Lord hath trodden the wine-press, for the virgin daughter of Juda.*

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Faithless Jerusalem says, that the Lord has deprived her of all her best subjects, that he has destroyed, at the time marked out for his vengeance, the most distinguished of her citizens; in a word, that he has prepared against the daughter of Sion all the scourges of his justice; for the *wine-press* in scripture signifies *vexation, affliction, chastisement*. All this is destruction to the sinner. What is the meaning of *calling time against him*? It can be nothing else, than to take him out of this world, to hasten the moment of his ruin, and to sink his days in the abyss. Then the sinner finds himself under the *wine-press* of divine wrath. And how often has not this angry judge selected the season of pleasure, the days of idleness and debauch to strike the libertine, and to *crush him* as if with a thunderbolt? He appears before the supreme tribunal, and the Eternal who presides there, the

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Eternal who knows the past, the present, and the future, *calls time against him* in order to reproach with its abuse this worldling, this madman who knew not that time was the *price* of eternity.

Ah! God my Saviour, how I dread this *appeal of time* against me, this picture of my life which you exhibit to my view on the day of your anger! This *time* which runs on, and which unceasingly vanishes from me, is nevertheless written down in the eternal book of your omniscience, and it will be the witness which you will produce against me. So many days of disorder, prevarication, and forgetfulness of your holy law; so many moments squandered away in amusements, in useless discourses, in frivolous readings, in superfluous visits; so many years consecrated to vanity, to a search after my own ease, to the advancement of my fortune; so many holy exercises which I have omit-

ted, or which I have not only performed without fruit, but in such a manner as to dishonor you by my tepidity, my distractions, my dissipations, and my irreverence. O Lord! whilst you still leave me time which you do not *call*, which you do not cite *against me*, grant me the grace to use it well, to repair those lost years, to look upon every moment as one that may decide whether I shall be a reprobate or a saint. O God of mercies, God of eternity! I am confounded by this *appeal of time* with which you threaten me. My days are vanishing, and what will become of me, if you cut the thread of my existence before I shall have begun to love you?

16. AIN.—*Therefore do I weep, and my eyes run down with water: because the comforter, the relief of my soul, is far from me: my children are desolate because the enemy hath prevailed.*

What are those *desolate children* in the state of a sinner, but all his senses and faculties which are under the captivity of sin? An habitual sinner neither sees, nor hears, nor speaks but to gratify his passions: he thinks only of the objects of his desires. Sin becomes so habitual with him that he does not even perceive his falls. Sin *prevails* over him, sin governs him as a master; and yet this sinner does not know how to imitate conquered, vanquished, and fallen Jerusalem. He sheds no tears over his unhappy children; nay, so far is he from lamenting, that he takes a pride in his miseries.

17. PHE.—*Sion hath spread forth her hands, there is none to comfort her: the Lord hath commanded against Jacob, his enemies are round about him: Jerusalem is as an unclean woman amongst them.*

How could guilty Jerusalem find consolation in the world? It is a truth of

experience that persons in affliction find no peace nor consolation but in the Lord, a peace and consolation which spring from a good conscience and a firm hope of immortality. If there were just men in Jerusalem at the time of her misfortunes, I am convinced that their hearts were at peace in the midst of the flames which devoured their city: that they beheld in those revolutions only the will of the Lord; that they went into a strange land, blessing the hand that smote them, that they joyfully bore the yoke of their new masters. O God, how lovely you are, even when you lay your arm heavily on your friends!

18. SADE.—*The Lord is just, for I have provoked his wrath: hear I pray you, all ye people, and see my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.*

Jerusalem cannot excuse her wanderings. Her judge possesses infinite light

and wisdom. This is what produces the despair of the sinner who is condemned before the tribunal of God. Every thing is proved, verified, manifested: *Ah Lord!* cried out the Apostle, (1 Cor. iv. 4,) *I am conscious of nothing yet in this I am not justified*, because you sound the depths of my heart, because you know me better than I know myself. *If you examine every thing*, said the Royal Prophet, *who can abide the rigor and accuracy of your search?* (Psalm cxxix.)

19. CAPH.—*I called for my friends but they deceived me; my priests and my ancients pined away in the city; while they sought their food to relieve their souls.*

In the general confusion of Jerusalem she was deceived by her friends and allies who promised her succor. Her priests occupied with the care of providing for their subsistence abandoned the functions of zeal. How well does this describe to us

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the state of the dying sinner ! He is sometimes surrounded by friends, but these friends deceive him, they dissemble his danger, or they prevent him from attending to his salvation. Sometimes the ministers of religion are not found at home when called to the dying man, or if they present themselves they are persons incapable of clearing the chaos of his conscience which is laden with crimes. Still more frequently there is no time left for an examination which would require several days or weeks. In general there are few dying sinners who have the happiness to profit by the succors of religion. If these sources of salvation are opened to them, it is with precipitation, it is to fulfill those duties which the world requires, it is nearly always to heighten the measure of their crimes by adding to their past iniquities the profanation of the blood of Jesus Christ. O Lord my God ! your pre-

ious blood falls on those guilty heads as it did on the Jews, who with loud cries demanded your death.

20. RES.—*Behold O Lord, for I am in distress, my bowels are troubled; my heart is turned within me, for I am full of bitterness; abroad the sword destroyeth, and at home there is death alike.*

Jerusalem's greatest misfortune was to see herself troubled within by factions, by false prophets, by enthusiasts who promised her relief, whilst Jeremias, inspired by God, advised her to bend to the yoke and submit to the Chaldeans. The interior of this city was like death. And what is my interior, great God! when I stray from your paths, and listen to nothing but my passions? It is like death! This word includes deformity, insensibility, pestilential odor. All these are found in my soul when I abandon Him who is life, and light, and strength.

May I be dead, O my God! but let it be like those fervent Christians of whom your Apostle said that *they were dead*, and that *their lives were hidden with Christ in God*. (Col. iii. 3.) Blessed death, more blessed life! *Vital Death!* as St. Francis of Sales expressed it—the death of the passions, the life of love; death to the world, life in Jesus Christ, and through Jesus Christ alone!

21. SIN.—*They have heard that I sigh, and there is none to comfort me; all my enemies have heard of my evil, they have rejoiced that thou hast done it; thou hast brought a day of consolation, and they shall be like unto me.*

Jerusalem received promises in her first captivity, and the Lord did not deceive her. The Jews returned at the end of seventy years; and their enemies the Chaldeans and Egyptians were subdued, first by the Persians, afterwards

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by Alexander, and finally by the Romans. As long as we remain on earth, no matter how great may be our sins, we may still find consolation by doing penance. "But," says St. Augustine, "do not defer it from day to day." What! you pride yourself in your wisdom, and you fear lest there should be found two days of your life consecrated to holiness! You are not sure of living until to-morrow; you have only the present day in your possession. But even if you should survive until to-morrow, is it not a great blessing that this day and to-morrow are two days, which you may devote to the service of God? If to-morrow does not arrive, you are always certain of to-day; and if to-morrow should arrive, you may add it to this day which you enjoy. What! you desire a long life, and you do not fear a wicked one! you wish to live a long time, and to live in sin! There is a fund of

truth and wisdom, O my God, which moves and confounds me. I desire to serve you, and I delay it! Ah Lord! no more time is required to say, I love you, than to say, I will one day love you.

22. THAU.—*Let all their evil be present before thee; and make vintage of them as thou hast made vintage of me for all my iniquities; for my sighs are many, and my heart is sorrowful.*

This imprecation is directed against idolaters, who are accursed by God. Moreover this mode of speech, so frequent in the Scriptures, partakes more of prophecy than imprecation, as we particularly observe in the Holy Book of the Psalms. But whatever may be the case, I can address you this prayer, O Lord, against my evil thoughts. I present them all to you to be destroyed, as you have destroyed my worldly expectations. As they are my greatest ene-

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mies, the greatest obstacle to my salvation, I ought to wish for their destruction. They have tormented me, afflicted and tyrannized over me. May they disappear before the moment of my death arrives. O moment, for which all other moments of my life are made! O moment which discloses such great things, according to the expression of St. Ambrose, because you are a moment of light in my understanding, a moment of love in my will, a moment of peace in my whole interior.

CHAPTER II.

THIS chapter contains not the complaints of Jerusalem herself, but those of the Prophet Jeremy, and they are filled with an energy with which the Spirit of God alone could inspire his soul. He

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varies his portraits almost to infinity, he multiplies his figures, he discloses all the details of this great catastrophe. O Lord, grant me the grace to apply to my sinful soul all the characters of this melancholy picture!

1. ALEPH.—*How hath the Lord covered with obscurity the daughter of Sion in his wrath! how hath he cast down from heaven to the earth the glorious one of Israel, and hath not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger.*

I behold in this first verse the image of a sinful, or even of a tepid soul, who is obscured by her passions or infidelities. It resembles myself, O Lord, during the days of my prevarications. How many clouds were then raised in my spirit, my will, and my memory! How could I recognize you, O my God! through this profound darkness? You were near me by your power, by your immensity, by

the interior motions with which you inspired my soul; and my evil habits concealed your countenance from me. Make this veil be withdrawn to-day, O my Saviour! O the most beautiful of the children of men! May I no longer wander in obscurity, in the darkness of my passions; may I discover the true way of salvation, the way that leads to truth and life! You have suffered me *to be cast down to the earth*, and to roll amongst sinners. You no longer wished to repose upon me. *Remember*, O God of Jacob! that I am always your *footstool*, as I so often receive into my bosom your adorable body. Take up therefore your abode there, and manifest there your glory, as you formerly displayed it, above the Propitiatory, to the children of Israel. I say to you, with your servant Augustine, "O God, who knowest me so intimately, may I know you as much as possible!

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O strength of my soul, enter into it; grant that it may be united to you. You know what it is; make it worthy of yourself. Cleanse it from its blots and stains, in order that you alone may possess it, as in you alone it finds light, peace, and life."

2. BETH.—*The Lord hath cast down headlong, and hath not spared all that was beautiful in Jacob; he hath destroyed in his wrath the strongholds of the virgin of Juda, and brought them down to the ground; he hath made the kingdom unclean, and the princes thereof.*

All the misfortunes of Jerusalem are recounted in this verse; the destruction of its beauties, the total demolition of its fortresses, the pillage of its masters. What is a tepid soul? A countenance without beauty, a city without ramparts, a state without government. The beauty of a soul consists in the love of God, its

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strength and bulwarks in prayer; its government in the good order of its thoughts, its motives and affections. The soul is rendered hideous by sin, weak by dissipation, disordered by want of recollection and silence.

3. GHIMEL.—*He hath broken in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel; he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and he hath kindled in Jacob as it were a flaming fire, devouring round about.*

What takes place at the moment a sinner passes from this life into eternity? The Lord takes away all the strength he had, and all the power to do good, which had been given him; the Lord delivers him to the enemy, and enkindles a fire around him, which shall never be extinguished. I have never deeply reflected on those three things; the abandonment of the sinner, the power of his enemy, and the rigor of his punishment.

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Penetrate me, O Lord, with this truth, which made the greatest saints tremble; may I reflect without ceasing on the condition of your enemies in hell! "The reprobate" says St. Gregory the Great, "is tormented, and is never destroyed he incessantly dies, and yet always lives; he is always at his extremity and still exists; he ends every moment and is yet without an end. The recital of these things is terrible, what must the experience of them be to the damned?"

4. DALETH.—*He hath bent his bow as an enemy, he hath fixed his right hand as an adversary, and he hath killed all that was fair to behold in the tabernacle of the daughter of Sion, he hath poured out his indignation like fire.*

Figurative expressions, which depict the wrath of the Lord; *He bends his bow like an enemy*, when he strikes the sinner with death; *he fixes his hand upon him*,

when he judges him; he strips him of all his advantages, when he condemns him; *he pours out his indignation like fire*, when he casts him into hell. It is want of faith, O my God, that renders me insensible to those great truths. I am convinced that your Prophet has written them by your direction, under the figure of Jerusalem, in order to instruct all ages; I reverence those truths as your holy word, and yet I am, like Jerusalem, little affected by what they announce. Is it that I am waiting for those events, in order to be converted to you? But there will be then no more time. "Ah, wicked tree!" said St. Augustine; "do not be secure because you are spared; the stroke of the axe is only deferred; it will come, and you shall be cut down."

5. HE.—*The Lord is become as an enemy; he hath cast down Israel headlong, he hath overthrown all the walls thereof; he*

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hath destroyed his strongholds, and hath multiplied in the daughter of Juda the afflicted, both men and women.

When Jeremy speaks so often of overturned walls, and ruined bulwarks, does he not admonish us to watch over our senses in this life, which are as if the bulwarks of our soul? When these bulwarks are thrown down, when our soul gives admission to all the events and illusions of the world, what disorder is not introduced into our whole interior! O Lord! guard all my senses; my eyes, my tongue, my ears; do not suffer the enemy to gain an entrance by them; I have committed an infinite number of sins because I have not been careful to guard these ramparts; I have sinned by the freedom of my eyes; I have sinned by the intemperance of my tongue; I have sinned by the indiscretion of my ears; I am a plain open on all sides, and exposed to all the ravages of the ene-

my. What wisdom there is, O my God, in your holy church, when she administers to us, at the hour of death, those unctions to which you have annexed the virtue of purifying our senses! but ought I wait for this last moment to restrain my curiosity, my levity, and my vanity? Ah, Lord! one of your saints who dwelt in the desert said, that solitude preserves us from three dangerous enemies—speech, sight, and hearing; (St. Antony). “O solitude,” cried out St. Ephrem, “who art the guardian of the eyes, the ears, and the tongue * * * who art the wall and the rampart of all those who desire to combat for the kingdom of heaven!”

6. VAU.—*And he hath destroyed his tent as a garden, he hath thrown down his tabernacle; the Lord hath caused feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Sion; and hath delivered up king and priest to reproach, and to the indignation of his wrath.*

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This verse admirably describes what will take place on the day of general judgment. God will destroy the earth, as if it were a gardener's tent; he will demolish this dwelling-place, where he desired to be honored as in a temple. Then there will be no more solemnities, no more assemblies of the priests and Levites; bad princes and scandalous priests will be an object of contempt and indignation to the Sovereign Judge. Jerusalem was destroyed, but its inhabitants survived in Chaldæa. This material world shall perish, but men will be saved either for punishment or reward, according to their works. "If we believe in the coming of a judge," says St. Peter Chrysologus, "let us prepare for his judgment by the innocence of our lives. He that does not believe God will judge the world, denies his justice; and he does not expect to be judged, who lives in

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such a manner as to be one day condemned."

7. ZAIN.—*The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath cursed his sanctuary; he hath delivered the walls of the towers thereof into the hand of the enemy; they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of a solemn feast.*

It was not sacred canticles that the enemies of Jerusalem chaunted in the house of God. Those idolaters blasphemed the Most High, and turned his holy solemnities into derision. God permits them to do so, because he has abandoned his people. But the Chaldeans were stricken in their turn, and whilst their king Balthasar was profaning the vessels of the temple, he lost at the same time his crown and life. God permits the scandals which afflict his Church, one of the greatest of which is the profanation of his temples. The irreverences which

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are there committed, cry out for vengeance to the throne of God, and will form the subject of a terrible judgment at the last day. The Babylonians profaned the temple of Jerusalem, of whose sanctity they were ignorant, and they were punished. Christians profane the churches which, nevertheless, they profess to regard as houses of prayer and places filled with the majesty of the Most High; and do they flatter themselves that their immodesties and irreverences will escape with impunity? But whilst faith is weak amongst Christians, all exhortations on this point will be fruitless. It is the renewal of faith we should ask from the Lord; it is the motives of faith we should recall to the minds of the people; it is the beauty and merit of faith that we should proclaim without ceasing from the chairs of truth; it is the enemies of faith we should combat with zeal, and the great

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examples of faith furnished by the saints, which we should place before the eyes of the multitudes, who are assembled in our temples. O, faith of Paul, which prostrated him on the earth to obtain from the Father of mercies the conversion of the Gentiles, and the perseverance of the new faithful! O, faith of Chrysostom, which made him see the holy angels surrounding the sanctuary, and adoring Jesus Christ at the moment of the sacrifice! O, faith of Augustine, which prayed with the humility of a mendicant, and the fervor of a prophet! O, faith of all the saints, who by their prayers whilst on earth, and their presence at the divine office, resembled the heavenly intelligences in their recollection—their attention—their holy ardors!

8. HETH.—*The Lord hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Sion; he hath stretched out his line, and hath not with-*

drawn his hand from destroying; and the bulwark hath mourned, and the wall hath been destroyed together.

God is here represented as a conqueror, who wishing to complete the destruction of a city, takes its exact circumference with a line, in order that nothing may escape him. This *bulwark* particularly strikes me, and I wish, O Lord! I could develop the extent of its mystery and deep meaning. In religion and pious exercises, we should preserve and defend the smallest practices, provided they be good and authorized. The ancient doctors of the Church looked on every attempt made on the belief of the faithful, as heresy; and the saints have given examples of many works of supererogation, to cherish and sustain a Christian life. The weakness of faith, and the corruption of morals in Christianity had slight beginnings. The *outworks* were

allowed to be destroyed, in the hope of preserving the body of the place secure, and it has happened that the latter has yielded like the former; faith and morals have, in a great measure, come to be destroyed. This *bulwark* which *mourneth*, is in a Christian, a priest, or a religious, the neglect of prayer, tepidity in holy exercises, and a tendency to dissipation. This is what happens to a soul, which affects to confine itself to what is essential. Grace is weakened, the passions are strengthened, the devil redoubles his vigilance and attention; then follow great calamities, and the entire destruction of Jerusalem, that is, the reprobation of a faithless soul. "One that languishes," said a holy man, (*Fenelon, Letter 8*,) "ought to have within him the life and nourishment of love." Now, this life and food of love are preserved only by frequent exercises of prayer, spiritual

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readings, mortification, pious discourses, and, above all, by retreat and flight from the world, according to the degree of inspiration which we enjoy, and the state in which Providence has placed us.

9. TETH.—*Her gates are sunk into the ground ; he hath destroyed and broken her bars : her king and her princes are among the Gentiles ; the law is no more, and her prophets have found no vision from the Lord.*

Jeremias means that consoling prophecies are no longer left for the people of God ; for the announcement of misfortunes was very manifest, as Jeremias himself was engaged solely in this duty, and in declaring that the Lord had selected him to teach Israel, that she would be subdued and led into captivity. As the prophecy of this divinely inspired man may also regard the second destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, it is certain

that the terms of the Prophet are unre-
 stricted in this respect. Then the Lord
 no longer spoke to his people; he had
 spoken to them by Jesus Christ. The
 complete and irremediable destruction
 of this rebellious city had been decreed
 in the counsels of God. Henceforth,
 no more prophecies are to be expected;
 and, after eighteen hundred years, the
 wandering and captive people of the
 Jews, have neither law nor revelation.
 It only bears a character of reprobation,
 and furnishes Christianity with a con-
 stant and visible proof of its truth. O
 Lord my God! do not permit me to fall
 into the abyss into which this faithless
 nation has been plunged; do not suffer
 the light of your grace to be extinguished
 in me, or my will to become a captive in
 a strange land, that is, subject to the
 world and its vanities.

10. JOD.—*The ancients of the daughter*

of Sion sit upon the ground, they have held their peace; they have sprinkled their heads with dust, they are girded with hair-cloth; the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground.

When there is a great calamity in a state, the most wise old men are reduced to silence. What remedy could they afford to the public misery? They are contented with sighing, praying, and doing penance. When the younger people imitate them, it is a sign that their evils are extreme, for it requires powerful motives to affect or make them sad. Here the Prophet excepts no age from the general desolation; hence, the extremities, to which Jerusalem was reduced, fell upon all ages, sexes, and conditions. If there were just persons at that time in the city, I am convinced that, under sackcloth and ashes, their souls were at peace, that they adored in secret the judgments of God, and that

they cheerfully accepted the chalice of bitterness. Tribulations are so precious, that the Lord has, at no time, concealed from his friends, their mystery and their price. I readily believe, that the pagan philosophers and sages were ignorant of this treasure. I further think, that, even in Christianity itself, the pretended philosophers and wits are ignorant of this grand and incomprehensible mystery of the cross and of afflictions; they do not desire to find this precious pearl. But your saints, O my God! know that true wisdom is learned only in that school in which Jesus Christ suffering presides; in which the martyrs hold the first place, and where all the auditors and disciples are marked with the seal of the cross. May I enter, O Lord! into this holy assembly, which is a thousand times more respectable than all the academies of philosophers, and all the courts of kings. If I should flee from

your cross, O Divine Master ! I would be a terrible traitor, and would deserve to be deprived of it during my whole life.

11. CAPH.—*My eyes have failed with weeping ; my bowels are troubled ; my liver is poured out upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people, when the children and the sucklings fainted away in the streets of the city.*

The Prophet here testifies his own grief; and these are the sentiments of true Christians, particularly of zealous pastors, when they see errors multiplied, scandals increasing from day to day, and the children of the Church deprived of succor, and plunged in the abyss. Deplorable times, in which hell seems to be let loose, and the prince of darkness appears to insult Jesus Christ. But the man of faith always remains unshaken in the depth of his soul. He throws himself into the bosom of Providence ; he consoles himself

according to the advice of St. Paul, (Rom. xv. 4.) *by patience and the reading of the Scriptures.* Divine Scriptures! you announce every thing, to him that consults you, with an humble spirit, and a righteous heart. Ah! it is because the world knows you not, that the world is unhappy. In every age plans of legislation, for the tranquillity of states and the happiness of their people, have been formed. These were unnecessary cares, if the oracles of your holy books, O my God! were well known, properly attended to, protected, and observed.

12. LAMED.—*They said to their mothers, Where is corn and wine? When they fainted away as the wounded in the streets of the city; when they breathed out their souls in the bosoms of their mothers.*

This is a melancholy picture. We feel an interest, even after so many ages, in those little children who cry out for bread,

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and who perish like innocent victims in the public places, and in the bosoms of their disconsolate mothers. This is an image of what takes place in great persecutions of the Church, when the simple faithful ask, that the bread of life may be broken to them, and they may not be refused the wine of spiritual consolations. They turn towards the Church, their mother; but she is without lawful pastors—she groans under the yoke of idolaters or heretics. This is, however, a time of grace for fervent Christians;—they bestow their property to comfort their brethren, and lay down their lives, to bear witness to the truth. The Church is never without persecutions. There are always infidels who attack her, heretics who assail her, scandalous Christians, who dishonor her, worldlings who do not listen to her, tepid souls who do not assist her, negligent pastors who do

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not increase her, or ignorant shepherds who do not defend her, false philosophers who impugn her, imprudent members who disturb her, ambitious men who despoil her, politicians who abandon her, impostors who divide her, hypocrites who profane her; and all this, O Lord! is but a small part of the evil grain that is scattered through your field. Preserve in me the love of your holy spouse. Grant me that *upright spirit* which the Prophet implored, that I may always follow the true road which your Church points out to me. Teach me to guard faithfully that precious *deposit*, of which the Apostle spoke to his disciple Timothy. May I *always avoid the profane novelty of words, and those difficulties which arise from false knowledge, according to his advice.* (1 Tim. vi. 20.)

13. MEM.—*To what shall I compare thee? Or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what shall I*

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equal thee that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion? For great as the sea, is thy destruction; who shall heal thee?

This verse is extremely forcible, and is a vivid picture of the calamity of this unfortunate city. Her misery is *like the sea*; it is *without a remedy*. There are in this life such disastrous events, that those who experience them may be compared to afflicted Jerusalem. But they have always a resource in hope, in prayer, in the expectation of a better life. The moment of a sinner's reprobation, is the only period of great and irremediable evils. The affliction and pain of the rich glutton in hell, are like a boundless, unfathomable, immeasurable, turbulent sea; and this is the state of every reprobate. We may say to each of these unhappy creatures, *Thy affliction is great, like the sea; who shall heal thee?* Not God, who is forever enraged against thee; not the world,

which no longer exists for thee; not the devil, whose fury is let loose for ever against thee; not time, which is for thee no longer; not thy conscience, which will always cry out against thee; not the companions of thy punishment, who are in despair like thyself; not eternity, whose whole extent will be but an accumulation of evil upon thy devoted head. O Lord! when I reflect on the lot of the damned, and compare it with the state of this world, I am strongly tempted to believe, that there are very few persons, really persuaded of the existence of hell. If this truth were believed, would not mankind pursue a different line of conduct? If we were properly convinced of an eternity of punishment, would not a prudent and well-regulated self-love, cry out against the life which is led, I will not say, in the great world and in licentious companies, but even in professions that

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are apparently holy? From this incredulity, or, if you will, from this weak faith on the truth of hell, springs, in a great measure, the growth of irreligion. Dogmatizers of this kind, everywhere find weak spirits and hearts that are indifferent to this article of divine vengeance, and they easily succeed in persuading them that these punishments do not exist, and that every thing related of them is but a tissue of fables and illusions.

O my God! your servant who is actually writing (reading) these things, has never properly believed in a hell. He has not renounced this truth; he has said in the creed that he acknowledged it; and he has perhaps written (or spoken) something in its defence. But he has never had the intimate persuasion, the practical faith, the efficacious conviction of this dogma. I mistake, O Lord! I have had them sometimes; but it was like that fool,

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of whom your Apostle speaks, (James i. 23, 24,) *who looked at himself for a moment in the glass, but who immediately departed and forgot what he had seen.* Grant me therefore this day, O my God! a true faith in hell—in this *affliction* which is *great*, like the sea; in this eternity which is a thousand times more immense than all seas; in this state which is *without consolation, and without remedy!*

14. NUN.—*Thy prophets have seen false and foolish things for thee; and they have not laid open thy iniquity, to excite thee to penance; but they have seen for thee false revelations and banishments.*

In her two calamities, Jerusalem was the dupe of false prophets and seducers, who flattered her by the hope of speedy succors. These predictions were the effects of enthusiasm, and Jerusalem perished, together with her pretended doctors. It is a great misfortune for the Church

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when she has pastors and teachers who are too deficient in knowledge, or too indulgent, guides who are not able to point out to the people the way that leads to life, who give too much confidence to sinners in their wanderings. They are lost, together with the souls intrusted to their care. I have no lights, O my God! and I am abandoned to my own direction. Do not suffer me to stray from the paths of justice. Direct me, O Lord, by your holy Scriptures, by the examples of your saints, and above all by that of Jesus Christ, my great model!

15. SAMECH.—*All they that have passed by the way have clapped their hands at thee; they have hissed and wagged their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying—Is this the city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the earth?*

Jerusalem in her disgrace and degradation, represents to us the fall of certain

persons who have been renowned for all manner of virtues. Of such men, every age of the Church has furnished us with examples. These unhappy Christians have either abandoned the faith, or disgraced themselves by scandalous lives. Melancholy events! which have made the Church mourn, and libertines triumph. Whatever progress we may have made in the ways of God, let us never forget this saying of St. Augustine—"There is no crime committed by man, of which another man may not be guilty, if he who created man, should cease to direct him."

16. PHE.—*All thy enemies have opened their mouth against thee; they have hissed and gnashed with the teeth, and have said, we will swallow her up—lo, this is the day which we looked for; we have found it, we have seen it.*

Jerusalem was an object of jealousy to

all the people of the east. They were proud to have witnessed the moment of her humiliation and destruction. I figure to myself the moment when the enemies of salvation seize on a guilty soul at its departure from the world. All hell is then rejoicing at its victory—*lo, this is the day which we looked for, say they, we have found it*—this prey cannot escape us. O Lord! this dreadful day, is the day of death, the day, after which there is no more time, no more resource, no more life. Fill my heart, O God! with the fear of this terrible day. I live in the world, only to behold this last day. Ah! if this day shall be to me the beginning of a miserable eternity, what advantage can I reap from a life that is in other respects fortunate and agreeable, or even from a life the greater part of which is spent in good works, and in the exercise of your love? This last moment

is the important question; and this moment is in your hands, O my God!

O fruitful subject of reflection! O inexhaustible source of thought! O invariable rule of my conduct! O what truth there is in this saying of St. Jerome, (*Ep.* 48 *ad Furiam*,) "The end and not the beginning, is the important concern for Christians!"

17. AIN.—*The Lord hath done that which he purposed, he hath fulfilled his word, which he commanded in the days of old; he hath destroyed, and hath not spared, and he hath caused the enemy to rejoice over thee, and hath set up the horn of thy adversaries.*

God had declared by the mouth of Moses, (*Deut.* xxviii. 15, &c.) that if his people should forsake his law, he would deliver them up to cruel and merciless enemies. He had for a long time deferred the execution of his threats. Israel at

length filled up the measure of her crimes, and the maledictions uttered against her produced their effect. We are surprised at the obstinacy and stubbornness of this nation; but if we be just, we must equally condemn ourselves, who have derived from the Gospel a purer light, who have before our eyes the examples of the life and death of Jesus Christ. *O senseless men!* said the Apostle to the Galatians, (iii. 1,) *who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been set forth, crucified among you?*

18. SADE.—*Their heart cried to the Lord upon the walls of the daughter of Sion: Let tears run down like a torrent day and night; give thyself no rest, and let not the apple of thy eye cease.*

It is the damned in hell alone whose tears are inexhaustible, *the apple of whose eye is never rested.* Let us bewail

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our sins in this life, that we may not be exposed to those eternal and unavailing tears. "Let us often think," said St. Chrysostom, "of the devouring fire, of the worm that never dies, of the gnashing of teeth, of the darkness visible, of the eternal chains, and above all of the privation of the love of Jesus Christ," (*ad Theodor. laps.*;) for, added this holy doctor—"A thousand hells with all their punishments, are nothing in comparison to those terrible words, *I know you not.*" —(*Eclog. de futuro judicio.*)

19. OEPH.—*Arise, give praise in the night, in the beginning of the watches; pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord; lift up thy hands to him for the life of thy little children, that have fainted for hunger at the top of all the streets.*

The Prophet here suggests sentiments of penance to his people; and the con-

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ditions of their return to God, are all pointed out in this verse. There is no sinner who may not apply this instruction to himself. *Arise from thy inaction; renounce this sloth by which thou art held captive;—Praise the Lord, or as the Hebrew has it, "Cry out to him"—acknowledge his justice—implore his mercy. Select for this purpose the right time, and solitude. Pour out thy heart in the presence of thy Judge; and pour it out like water, that is, with an effusion, of the most tender and lively sentiments. Lift up thy hands to him as a suppliant who prays for pardon. Ask him for preservation of thy little children, namely, the principles of faith, and a grateful heart for the kindness of so great a master. Ask him for the reformation of all thy faculties, that they may enter into the way of innocence. Acknowledge that thy abandonment of God, has*

reduced thee to extreme misery, even to
perish with hunger in the very bosom of
the Church, thy Mother.

20. *Read.*—Behold, O Lord, and con-
sider whom thou hast thus dealt with; shall
women then eat their own fruit; their child-
ren of a span long? Shall the priest
and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary
of the Lord?

Such were the extremities to which
Jerusalem was exposed during her two
sieges. When the sinner is torn by re-
morse, he, in a manner, consumes him-
self; his thoughts destroy each other.
He would wish to arise from this abyss
of trouble and interior reproaches. He
seeks for peace, and where shall he find
it, but in you, O Lord? "Whilst I was
deliberating on my conversion," said St.
Augustine, "I willed and I willed it not.
I willed, but not fully and absolutely; I
willed it not, yet I never ceased to desire

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it a little. I disputed with myself, and I myself deranged the order of my own thoughts. I wished to die to death and to live to life; but my bad habits had more power over me than the love of good, to which I had not been accustomed. At length, O Lord! you have turned me towards you, you have broken my chains; and from that moment my soul has been delivered from the cares that devoured it. Then I could speak to you, O my God! who art my life, my riches, and my salvation."

21. SIN.--*The child and the old man lie without on the ground; my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; thou hast slain them in the day of thy wrath; thou hast killed, and showed no pity.*

Nothing is wanted for the complete desolation of Jerusalem. Every thing perishes; children, young persons of

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both sexes, old men, the prophet and the priest, and all this desolation is produced by the anger of God. It is a mournful image of the condemnation of a sinner. Every thing is extinguished in him, except his soul, his conscience, and his sin. He finds himself between a frightful void and a hideous chaos: a void of good works and of the love of God, a chaos of iniquities and scandals; a void of time and resources, a chaos of eternity and punishment; a void of comfort and protection, a chaos of wrath and vengeance; a void of friends and of hope, a chaos of persecutors and despair. Ah, Lord! if Jerusalem had escaped your anger upwards of two thousand years ago, it is probable that time and events would have stripped her of her splendor, that she would have perished like so many cities and empires of which history has left us no trace. But the sinner con-

damned at your tribunal is immortal. You will preserve him as a monument of your anger. The world will pass away, the sun will be extinguished, the earth and the elements will be destroyed; but this reprobate will have a duration as extensive as that of your angels and saints. He will drink the chalice of your indignation even to the dregs, and this chalice will never be exhausted. What then is the death of the sinner? cries out St. Bernard. It is wretched, because he loses the world which he loved; it is more wretched, because he is separated from the body which he idolized; it is most miserable, because he becomes the prey of the worm that never dies, and of the fire that is never extinguished. (*Epist.* 150.)

22. THAU.—*Thou hast called, as to a festival, those that should terrify me round about, and there was none in the day of the*

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breath of the Lord that escaped and was left; those that I brought up and nourished, my enemy hath consumed them.

This is the conclusion of a chapter which is crowded with so many melancholy pictures. I have begun it, O Lord! for the advantage of my soul. Grant me some of those graces with which you enlightened your prophet. Make me understand, that abandoned and desolate Jerusalem is my soul, which is loaded with crimes, surrendered to its passions, and deprived of your love.

CHAPTER III.

IN this chapter Jeremy bewails his own misfortunes. We behold in his prophecy, all the persecutions he endured for having announced the destruc-

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tion of Jerusalem. He is scourged with rods, he is twice cast into prison, he is thrown into a deep and filthy pit. He was exposed to contradictions, to calumnies, to hunger, to nakedness. He only began to get a little respite, when Nebuchadonazor had taken the city. This prince commanded Nabuzardan, the general of his army, to treat him kindly. Nabuzardan released him from prison, and gave him permission to dwell where-soever he pleased.

The lamentations contained in this third chapter must be referred to the time when the Prophet experienced those trials. He mingles with his own misfortunes, those of his people, and pours out in many verses, motives of consolation founded on the divine mercy, and suited to the occasion.

1. ALEPH.—*I am the man that see my poverty by the rod of his indignation.*

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2. *He hath led me and brought me into darkness, and not into light.*

3. *Only against me he hath turned, and turned again his hand all the day.*

We must not consider these and the following complaints as the result of ill-humor or impatience. God had chosen Him before He formed Him in the bowels of His mother; He had sanctified Him before his birth; He had designed Him to announce His will to Israel and the nations. (Jer. i. 5.) Those lamentations are a recital of his sufferings, when he speaks of himself, and an instruction to the just who suffer persecution. They should begin by acknowledging their poverty under the hand of God that strikes them. Jesus Christ on the cross, looked on himself as a poor man; he said that he was a worm, and no man. (Ps. xxi. 25.) He was both the Son of God, and equal to his Father, but he was also man, and he saw between his human-

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ity, properly so called, and taken separately, and his Divinity, an infinite distance. Whatever our condition may be, we should always appear as beggars in the sight of God. The prayer of the poor man, says St. Ambrose, (*de Cain et Abel*, i. 9,) pierces through the heavens; and we see on the contrary, in the Gospel, how the prayer of the proud Pharisee is rejected and condemned. Jeremy was not less enlightened by God, when in the darkness of his prison; and when released from thence, he did not cease to repeat his prophecies against Jerusalem, Sedecias, and the whole people. The good man is invariable in his principles. He depends neither on events nor circumstances. The persecutions of men only strengthen his love of justice, and the scourges of God only serve to purify his virtue.

4. BETH.—*My skin and my flesh he hath made old; he hath broken my bones.* . . .

5. *He hath bulled round about me, and he hath compassed me with gall and labor.*

6. *He hath set me in dark places, as those that are dead for ever.*

Figurative expressions, as the generality of those in the Book of Lamentations are, but the figures are all different. For to make a man old, to break his bones, to encompass him, to fill him with bitterness, to confine him in a dark prison, and to reduce him to a state of death, are different traits of the same picture. There are sinners to whom these figures are applicable. For instance, a hardened sinner is like an old man, whose flesh is dried up, whose bones have no strength. He is, as it were, invested by sin, and by all the consequences of sin. He is plunged in the thickest darkness, and he has hardly any more life to do good. There are just persons also whom the Lord tries, and to whom these figures are not very inapplicable.

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cable; they are withered and dried up, if we may say so, in the midst of crosses and tribulations; they have neither credit, nor favor, nor protection in the world; they are encompassed by interior sufferings; they walk by obscure paths, although they end in salvation; they find naught but bitterness and sorrow in all things; they are amongst the living as if they were dead and forgotten. I believe, O Lord! that your great Apostle was in this situation when he said, that *his body could enjoy no rest; that he was exposed to all sorts of tribulation; that he had combats without and fears within.* (2 Cor. vii. 5.) But this wonderful man also said that, *he was filled with consolation; and that he was swimming in the midst of tribulations.* (Ibid. 5.) What cannot the love of Jesus Christ and his cross effect in the heart that is filled with it, as St. Paul was?

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7. *CEILING.*—*He hath built against me round about, that I may not get out; he hath made my fetters heavy.*

8. *Yea, and when I cry and entreat, he hath shut out my prayer.*

9. *He hath shut up my ways with square stones, he hath turned my paths upside down.*

Jeremias alludes to the deep ditch into which he was thrown. It was a place from whence it was impossible for him to get out, and he knew not how long this cruel confinement should last, all his ways were consequently blocked up, that is, he knew not how to escape from this persecution. He prayed, and God did not hear him at the moment, because he intended him as a model of patience, and because he was a figure of Jesus Christ persecuted and put to death by the Jews. The just, who cry out to the Lord, do not always obtain

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what they ask. But God invariably grants them something better than what they desire. *My grace is sufficient for you,* said the Lord to St. Paul, *for power is perfected in infirmity.* (2 Cor. xii. 9.)

10. DALETH.—*He is become to me as a bear lying in wait, as a lion in secret places.*

11. *He hath turned aside my paths, and hath broken me in pieces; he hath made me desolate.*

12. *He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for his arrows.*

There are men persecuted in this life who seem to be set up as a mark for all the darts of envy, calumny, and vexation. Such, for instance, was St. Athanasius. The whole East rose up against him, and he escaped one persecution only to fall into another. It is thus God treats great souls, the heroes of Christianity, men animated with a lively

faith; and this is what St. Paul perfectly explained in the long enumeration which he made to the Hebrews (c. xi.) of the holy patriarchs and prophets who were successively exposed to all manner of trials. *The world was not worthy of those excellent men, and it required all the riches of God's magnificence to reward them.* Let us, therefore, in our sufferings, say with a truly spiritual man, "Oh, how God loves us, since he strikes us without pity!" (*Fenelon, Lett. 158.*)

13. HE.—*He hath shot into my reins the daughter of his quiver.*

14. *I am made a derision to all my people, their song all the day long.*

15. *He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath inebriated me with wormwood.*

16. VAU.—*And he hath broken my teeth, one by one; he hath fed me with ashes.*

When one is poor and unfortunate he is despised and mocked by the world,

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which is one of the greatest proofs of its treachery and inhumanity. This *bitterness*, this *wormwood*, with which the Lord filled the prophet, are the tribulations with which he visits the just in order to try their virtue. These *broken teeth* are the bad treatment to which their person is exposed. Jeremiah was beaten with rods, and cast into a prison. St. Paul was beaten five times, scourged thrice, stoned once; he was thrice shipwrecked; he experienced hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness; and how many dangers did he encounter in his voyages, from his brethren, from the Gentiles, &c.? (2 Cor. xi. 24, 25, &c.) We read those things with admiration, because we know that Jeremiah, Paul, and the other persecuted saints are in glory; but, if we had lived with them, what value would we have set on these poor, humble, and abandoned men? We would imagine that

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we saw defects and conduct in them which drew down those persecutions upon their heads. We would have decided that it was their own fault, that their zeal was excessive, that they attempted things which were too dangerous, that they meddled with affairs which were above their condition and their strength. Blinded as we are to these characters of virtue and sanctity, we wait to value sufferings until the crown of glory has consummated the bliss of those who suffer; although sufferings ought, even in this life, to direct our attention to the merit of those who endure them.

17. VAU.—*And my soul is removed far off from peace; I have forgotten good things.*

18. *And I said; my end (the end of my evils) and my hope is perished from the Lord.*

The prophet here speaks of temporal

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goods, of the safety of his person, and the peace of his country. He no longer hopes for those advantages: but he has still remaining that which forms the consolation of the saints—confidence in God and prayer, to which the following verses are devoted.

19. ZAIN.—*Remember my poverty and transgression, the wormwood and the gall.*

20. *I will be mindful and remember, and my soul shall languish within me.*

21. *These things I shall think over in my heart, therefore will I hope.*

Jeremiah says that he will hope in the Lord; and why? Because he is poor and afflicted; because he is humble in his sufferings; because he addresses himself to the Lord, and relies on his bountiful goodness. Job did the same in his afflictions. "He seemed annihilated," says St. Augustine; he had lost his property, his children, his heirs. Was

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he unhappy on that account? No; because he was hidden in the secret of the Lord: that is, because he conversed with his God, and because his God was well pleased in him. *I will hope*: this word of Jeremiah has a very extensive signification. *I will hope* for lights to guide myself and instruct others. *I will hope* for consolations in the midst of the greatest trials. *I will hope* for victory over my enemies, visible and invisible. *I will hope* for the preservation of my faith in the midst of infidels. *I will hope* for a precious death in the sight of my sovereign judge. *I will hope* for the reward of my labors in another life. *I will hope* for the glorious resurrection of this body, which is bent down under the weight of tribulations. Ah, Lord! what sublime hopes are found in the heart which you feed in this life with bitterness and wormwood.

22. HETH.—*The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed: because his compassions have not failed.*

23. Thy mercies are renewed every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

24. *The Lord is my portion, said my soul; therefore will I wait for him.*

There is a fund of sentiment and admirable instruction in those three verses. Lord, I acknowledge that I owe it to your mercy alone that I am not entirely destroyed, that I am not this day amongst the number of the reprobate. Your compassion towards me is renewed every moment of my life. You have been faithful in your promises; faithful in your holy decrees; faithful in your inspirations; faithful even in the scourges of your justice, because you made me acquainted with the hand that afflicted me. May my soul incessantly repeat that consecration to your service which

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was made so long since. *The Lord is my portion.* He is the only good that is destined for me in this life and in the next; I will, therefore, hope in him, I will wait for the moment of his visitation, I will repose in his bosom; and I am certain that his beneficent hand will always sustain me.

25. TETH.—*The Lord is good to them that hope in him, to the soul that seeketh him.*

26. *It is good to wait with silence for the salvation of God.*

27. *It is good for a man when he hath borne the yoke from his youth.*

There is still farther instruction in these three verses. 1st. In order to obtain favors from the Lord, we must wait for them and seek them. 2d. We must, for the same purpose, preserve a stricter silence. 3d. We must bear the yoke of the Lord from our youth, if we wish to be

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accustomed to it. If I were as enlightened in your ways, O my God! as I ought to be, after having spent so many years in your holy service, I would derive from all those points subjects of meditation for my whole life. May I be allowed to ask you, O eternal Truth! what it is to hope in you, what it is to seek you, to expect your salvation, and how I am to preserve silence whilst expecting this grace; how I am to bear the yoke, and what advantage it is to have borne it from youth? I do not know these things, or, at least, I have but a very imperfect knowledge of them. I believe, however, that to hope in you is to lay all our miseries before you, to beseech you to heal them by your grace, and to have confidence in your mercies. I believe that to seek you is to turn frequently towards you, to be devoted to prayer, and to do nothing but for the

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purpose of pleasing you. I believe that to expect the salvation of the Lord is to live here below as a stranger, to think frequently on our last end, to consider the future as the true life, and to despise the present as a state of exile and death. I believe that to expect this salvation in silence, is to preserve peace of mind, to speak little, to have great recollection, and to hold unceasing converse with Jesus Christ. I believe that *to bear the yoke*, is to receive from you, O my God! sufferings, privations, and contradictions without a murmur; and to desire above all things that your holy will should be accomplished. With regard, O Lord! to the time of youth, which should be the season of obedience and docility under the yoke of your holy will, I am no longer in a condition to satisfy that duty. My years have vanished away; but this day, which you bestow me, precedes all

those which, perhaps, it may be your will yet to grant me. This present day is a sort of youth, with regard to other days that are more distant and remote. I desire, therefore, to *bear your yoke* from this very day, and not to defer the sacrifice of my heart to another time. I promise you my liberty, my strength, and my desires. I am entirely yours; dispose of me according to the views of your wisdom and mercy.

28. JOD.—*He shall sit solitary and hold his peace: because he hath taken it upon himself.*

29. *He shall put his mouth in the dust if so be there may be hope.*

30. *He shall give his cheek to him that striketh him; he shall be filled with reproaches.*

He that bears the yoke of the Lord should live in solitude, to preserve silence and humility, to bear with injuries, and

to submit to insults. The last verse evidently refers to Jesus Christ our Lord, of whom it is written, that *he was the reproach of men and the outcast of the people*, (Ps. xxi. 7,) *that he was buffeted*, (Matt. xxvi. 67,) and *that he would not turn away his face when he was spit upon*. (Is. l. 6.)

Jeremy was a figure of this divine Saviour, and our divine Saviour is this day our model. *Let us go forth then, according to the advice of St. Paul, and walk with him outside the camp, bearing his ignominies*. (Heb. xiii. 13.)

81. CAPH.—*For the Lord will not cast off for ever.*

82. *For if he hath cast off, he will also have mercy, according to the multitude of his mercies.*

83. *For he hath not willingly afflicted, nor cast off the children of men.*

The prophet here consoles himself and

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comforts his people by the remembrance of the mercies of the Lord. When the Lord strikes, *he does not do so willingly*; he is always inclined to bestow favors. When he strikes, he always remembers his mercy. When he strikes, he only waits the return of the sinner, to forgive him. All this must be understood of the present life; for, when the moment of his rigorous justice arrives, he then strikes as an irritated master. Ah, Lord! do not close your paternal bosom against me, whilst the light yet shines upon my eyes. *Who shall praise your name in the tomb*, said the prophet. (Ps. vi. 6.) If I be lost, it is a soul created after your image that will for ever blaspheme this adorable name; a name which constitutes the happiness of the angels and saints. O God of pity! move me, convert me this day. Time is short; do not suffer me to abuse it.

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34. LAMED.—*To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the land.*

35. *To turn aside the judgment of a man before the face of the Most High.*

36. *To destroy a man wrongfully in his judgment, the Lord hath not approved.*

The prophet wishes to declare in those three verses that the Lord had preserved many Israelites notwithstanding the scourges with which he afflicted Judea; that the Most High knew how to be just to his faithful servants; that he has weighed, in the balance of his inflexible equity, the merits of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. All were subjected to the dominion of a stranger; but the divine goodness knew how to protect the just, and to soften the rigors of their captivity. We have proofs of this in the three children in the fiery furnace, in Nehemias, in Esdras, in Susanna, &c. As long as we remain on earth, sinful though we may be, the Lord *does not crush*

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us under his feet; he leaves us time to return to him; time that is infinitely precious, and whose value increases with our age, because the sum of our days is being incessantly abridged. "The older we grow," said a wise man, "the more unseemly it is that we should live as fools. The time that is given us to acquire wisdom will speedily expire; there will be no opportunity to form resolutions in the tomb."

37. MEM.—*Who is he that commanded a thing to be done, when the Lord commandeth it not?*

38. *Shall not both evil and good proceed out of the mouth of the Highest.*

39. *Why hath a living man murmured; man, suffering for his sins?*

Jeremy has condensed more true wisdom in these verses than is to be found in all the philosophical works of antiquity; he represents God as the author of every thing that happens; good and evil proceed

from His mouth, that is, He ordains their existence—He regulates their measure—He determines their effects. We must understand that physical evils are here alluded to; because moral evil, which is sin, could not be the work of God. Moral evil is only a privation of justice, and God produces only real and positive evils. Physical evils which affect mankind so strongly, which cause so much murmuring in the world are, according to the views of Providence, a real blessing. They exercise virtue, purify sentiments, display patience and greatness of soul, preserve the conscience in peace, and bestow on the Christian that precious conformity with Jesus Christ, which is the seal of a blessed immortality.

40. NUN.—*Let us search our ways, and seek, and return to the Lord.*

41. *Let us lift up our hearts, with our hands to the Lord in the heavens.*

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42. *We have done wickedly, and provoked him to wrath: therefore thou art inexorable.*

The Lord wished to punish Jerusalem, for its obstinacies and revolts during so many ages; but he was not in the strict sense 'of the word, *inexorable*: and the Prophet declared this when he invited his people to return to the Lord, and to implore his forgiveness by the acknowledgment of their crimes. All the conditions of penance are here pointed out; to search out his ways, to implore the mercy of God, to acknowledge that we have deserved the divine vengeance, to accept from his hand the scourges which he inflicts in this life, on those whom he desires to save in the next.

43. SAMECH.—*Thou hast covered in thy wrath and hast struck us; thou hast killed and hast not spared.*

44. *Thou hast set a cloud before thee, that our prayer may not pass through.*

45. *Thou hast made me as an outcast, and refuse in the midst of the people.*

This cloud in which the Lord was enveloped, and which prevented prayer from passing through, shows the determination of the Lord to punish his people. Prayer proceeded only from the hearts and mouths of some just men, such as Jeremy, Baruch, and Ezechiel. The great mass of the nation was always rebellious and addicted to idolatry, like the four last kings, Joachaz, Joachim, Jechonias, and Sedecias, of whom it is written that they *did evil in the sight of the Lord*, like the generality of their predecessors; for it is a deplorable thing that out of twenty-three kings who had worn the crown of Juda, from the time of Saul, we hardly find four or five who faithfully served the Lord; and of nineteen kings who reigned over Israel there was scarcely one who was not abandoned

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to the worship of false gods. Terrible examples of the depravity of the human understanding, and the human heart! The prophets remained faithful in their obedience to the law, but they shared in the scourges with which God chastised this faithless people; there was however this difference, that the public misfortunes only tended to their sanctification, whilst they rendered the nation only more obstinate and more hardened. I acknowledge, O Lord! in the bitterness of my heart that your scourges are precious graces, chosen graces, graces which have made great saints, and which I have abused during my whole life; I could apply to myself on many occasions the descriptions with which your Prophet has filled his divine book. You have stricken me, you have made me the outcast of the world, and deprived me of human consolation; you have even per-

mitted my soul to be troubled by importunate temptations so that I have nothing but confusion and disorder in my imagination, in my understanding, and in my will. How far have these tribulations succeeded in perfecting my interior? Am I more humble, more patient, more recollected, more devoted to prayer, more constant in pious exercises? And what then should I become, O my God! if the world had lavished its favors upon me, if I had been born in opulence, if I had had talents or the graces of conversation, if I had collected together all the stores of knowledge, if my country had been interested for my glory, if all brilliant societies had received me as a person capable of pleasing, of instructing, of giving advice, and protection? Your mercies, O Lord! have opened difficult paths for me; and I am far from being able to say with your Prophet that humiliations

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have taught me to keep your holy law.
(Psalm cxviii. 71.)

46. PHE.—*All our enemies have opened their mouths against us.*

47. *Prophecy is become to us a fear, and a snare, and destruction.*

48. *My eye hath run down with streams of water, for the destruction of the daughter of my people.*

I here observe the sensibility of the Prophet to the deplorable state of Jerusalem, his country. *He pours forth torrents of tears*, rather on account of her obstinacy than the scourges with which she was afflicted. Good men are more affected by the loss of souls, than all the temporal disasters which befall a great people; they know the value of a spiritual and immortal soul.

If the angels of God rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, it is because they know the misery of a damned soul. St.

Gregory said, that "it was a more admirable work to promote the conversion of a sinner, by exhortation and prayer, than to raise the dead to life; for by the resurrection of the dead, we only reanimate a body that must one day die again, whereas by the conversion of a sinner we give life to a soul that is to live for ever." (*Dial.* iii. 17.)

49. AIN.—*My eye is afflicted and hath no rest.*

50. *Till the Lord regarded and looked down from the heavens.*

51. *My eye hath wasted my soul, because of all the daughters of my city.*

In this last verse the Prophet declares, that his strength has been exhausted by the continual tears which he has shed over the unfortunate condition of those towns that were dependent on Jerusalem, for these are what he called the *daughters of his city*. Nebuchadonazor was not

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satisfied with pillaging Jerusalem, he made himself master of the whole country. . Jeremy tells us how the sinner should have a profound grief of heart, *until the Lord would regard and look down from the heavens, a regard which truly points out that grace without which the sinner cannot be converted; but even when he has reason to hope that this look of mercy has produced his conversion, he should still mourn over the evil inclinations which remain in his soul, over the uncertainty of salvation, and the danger of losing it; he should sigh in the expectation of a blessed eternity. This world is a country of tears, and God does not, properly speaking, look down on us from heaven, unless when he delivers us from this captivity. O Lord! may I have these groanings which your Holy Spirit produces in the soul of him that loves you! (Rom. viii. 26.) Unspeak-*

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able groanings, because it is impossible for all human eloquence to describe their fruits, their sweetness, and their efficacy.

52. SADE.—*My enemies have chased me, and caught me, like a bird without cause.*

53. *My life is fallen into the pit, and they have laid a stone over me.*

54. *Waters have flowed over my head: I said, I am cut off.*

Jeremy here speaks of his misfortunes, of the darksome dungeon into which he was thrown, and of the projects that were formed to put him to death. God inspired him to relate the history of these disasters in his prophecy, in order to teach posterity what the lot of good men is in this life, and how efficacious and visible a proof may be thence drawn for the existence of a future state. Under a just God, it is impossible that virtue should go unrewarded. Now, in this land of exile, in this valley of tears, vir-

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tue, far from being rewarded, generally encounters nothing but contradictions and storms. It is, therefore, inevitably necessary that God should reserve a happy and glorious future for virtuous men.

55. CAPH.—*I have called upon thy name, O Lord, from the lowest pit.*

56. *Thou hast heard my voice: turn not away thy ear from my sighs and cries.*

57. *Thou didst draw near in the day when I called upon thee; thou saidst, fear not.*

Notwithstanding his miseries and affliction, the Prophet felt the protecting hand of God. This is a consolation superior to all the interest which our most tender friends can feel for our distresses—a consolation, which diffuses joy through the most afflicted soul. “What a happiness,” cried out St. Francis of Sales, (*Letter 770*), “to serve God in a desert without man-

na, without water, and without any other consolations save those of being under his guidance, and of suffering for him!" St. Augustine says, (*Serm.* 160,) that "St. Paul must have well known the value of crosses." Listen to this great man. He might have said that he gloried in the wisdom of Jesus Christ, and this would have been true; he could have said that he gloried in the majesty, in the power of Jesus Christ, and this would have been still true; but he says his only glory is in the cross of Jesus Christ; he found his treasure where the philosophers thought they found nothing but ignominy. Jeremy was amongst the number of those holy prophets, *who beheld the promises at a distance*, (*Heb.* xi. 13,) who had faith in a Redeemer crucified for men. They looked on themselves as strangers on the earth; they overcame by faith all the fury of their enemies. What then should

not be our fidelity and courage—we who have before our eyes Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith? This is the summary of the entire doctrine of the Apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews.

58. RES.—*Thou hast judged, O Lord, the cause of my soul, thou the Redeemer of my life.*

59. *Thou hast seen, O Lord, their iniquity against me; judge thou my judgment.*

60. *Thou hast seen all their fury, and all their thoughts against me.*

The consolation of the saints is, that God beholds their conscience and rectitude, and that the proceedings of the wicked cannot escape the Eternal. Susanna, when delivered up to unjust judges, cried out, *O Eternal God, who knowest hidden things, who knowest all things before they come to pass. Thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me; and behold I must die, whereas I have done none*

of these things, which these men have maliciously forged against me. (Dan. xiii. 42, 43.) God hastened to the assistance of his servant. It might have happened to **Susanna** as it has to many others, who are unjustly persecuted, that the unlawful sentence pronounced against her should be carried into effect, for the counsels of God are far beyond all our conceptions. But it could not have happened that **Susanna** should for ever remain without a justification. The justice of God is as infallible as God himself; and this is what incontestably proves the necessity of a last day, on which all truth will be revealed, all iniquity confounded, all calumny refuted, and all virtue rewarded.

61. **SIN.**—*Thou hast heard their reproach, O Lord; all their imaginations against me.*

62. *The lips of them that rise up against me; and their devices against me all the day.*

63. *Behold their sitting down and their rising up, I am their song.*

The Prophet here repeats a portion of what he had said in the preceding verses. No touch is wanted to complete the picture of calumny and calumniators; conspiracies, injuries, raileries, violent proceedings, every thing is put in requisition against those whom it is sought to destroy. The history of the Church furnishes many examples of this violence. The Apostles were accused of disturbing the public peace, because they announced the mystery of redemption. The primitive Christians were accused of committing abominations in their assemblies, because they were obliged to separate themselves from unbelievers, for the purpose of prayer and the celebration of the holy mysteries. St. Athanasius was accused of exciting a revolt throughout all Egypt, because he maintained there the decrees

of the Council of Nice on the Consubstantiality of the Word. St. Jerome was accused of intriguing with the Roman ladies, because he conducted Paula, Eustochia, and other holy women in the ways of God. St. Chrysostom was accused of rebellion against the Emperor, because he disapproved of the profane dances which took place around the statue of the Empress. But what are all these examples in comparison to what was done against Jesus Christ? All the terms here used by the Prophet Jeremy were verified to the letter in the person of this divine Saviour. They plotted against him; they loaded him with injuries; they accused him of seducing the people, of destroying the law, of performing miracles in the name of the prince of darkness; they were profuse in their insults and raileries; in a word, they crucified him between two malefactors. O Lord! one

look of Calvary is enough to console all the just, who are calumniated and persecuted. This great event is applicable to every thing; we there see the prodigy of man's wickedness, the masterpiece of God's wisdom, and the pledge of that recompense that is due to virtue when despised in this world.

64. THAU.—*Thou shalt render them a recompense, O Lord, according to the works of their hands.*

65. *Thou shalt give them a buckler of heart, thy labor.*

66. *Thou shalt persecute them in anger, and shalt destroy them from under the heavens, O Lord.*

The second of these verses signifies, that the Lord will give the enemies of the Prophet an *oppression of heart*, which will encompass and cover them like a *buckler*, and which will be *labor*; that is, according to the Hebrew, *the malediction*.

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of the Lord. This is the announcement of that vengeance with which the enemies of Jerusalem and those of the Prophet are threatened. This *oppression of the heart*, which is compared to a *buckler*, shows that as these persecutors have been implacable and relentless in their malice, so they will be punished by regrets, and by the interior reproaches of their conscience; a chastisement which answers to the gnawing worm that is spoken of in the Gospel.

CHAPTER IV.

1. ALEPH.—*How is the gold become dim, the finest color is changed, the stones of the sanctuary are scattered in the top of every street?*

This verse shows the change that was made in the temple of Jerusalem by the

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irruption of the Chaldeans. This beautiful edifice was consumed by fire; the gold that covered it was tarnished by smoke; the stones of the sanctuary were dispersed through the city. There cannot, in my mind, be a stronger picture drawn of the state of an unhappy soul that has abandoned God, after having faithfully served him. In it the gold of charity is obscured, the edifice of its salvation falls into ruin, all its goods are dissipated, and the enemy ravages this precious portion of the inheritance of the Lord. Then the just, the ancient witnesses of the virtues of this soul, when she was faithful, say to her in the language of Jeremy, How has so great a revolution taken place in the temple of the Lord? We can easily discover the cause; it is the world that has seduced this soul, that was enriched with the gifts of grace.

Jerusalem has fallen into a forgetfulness of the true God and into idolatry, because of the commerce she has had with the neighboring states, who were all idolaters and corrupt in their ideas, projects, laws, and government. A good man who does not shun the society of worldlings, becomes infected with their vices, without learning what an association with the world should impart, namely, a knowledge of the world itself; a knowledge which would make him fly from, and abhor it. O God! a correct knowledge of the world would make us angels, whilst our imperfect or inaccurate knowledge of it makes us devils!

2. BETH.—*The noble sons of Sion, and they that were clothed with the best gold; how are they esteemed as earthen vessels, the work of the potter's hands?*

This verse denotes the great men of Jerusalem, who were carried away, cap-

tives with Sedecias. Are they not an image of the ministers of the Lord, men devoted to perfection, who forgetting their duties render themselves contemptible by a worldly life?

8. GHIMEL.—*Even the sea-monsters have drawn out the breast, they have given suck to their young, the daughter of my people is cruel, like the ostrich of the desert.*

The sea-monsters spoken of by Jeremiah are sharks or whales. The ostrich abandons her eggs and does not cover them. The author of the Book of Job is decided on this point, and refutes the opinion of some modern naturalists who deny it. The sentiment of the Prophet is also expressed by a comparison. There are animals savage by nature, who nevertheless take care of their young and protect them; the mothers of Jerusalem were reduced to such an extremity during the siege, that they abandoned their

own children, they resembled that voracious bird that does not cover its eggs.

When a soul is in disorder and beset with the enemies of her salvation, he watches no more over her senses, her affections, her motions, her words, or last end. Strange situation, of which I know not all the misery though I am sometimes placed in it! I observe in the words of the Prophet, an extensive instruction; in the world a man of a violent and passionate disposition can become patient, laborious, and industrious, when his interests are concerned, and is never wanting in any duty that public decorum imposes on him. Yet a man who makes a profession of serving God neglects all without scruple, when he allows himself to relax in doing good; he allows himself a freedom that leads him more and more from the paths of salvation; he decides in favor of what

he ought to condemn; it appears as if the care of his soul was an arbitrary labor from which he can dispense himself on the slightest pretext. O foolish man! consider the cruellest animals how they take care of the fruit of their entrails, and preserve them from dangers! will you resemble those wild birds that digest stones and neglect their little ones, though the rearing of them is most easy? Ah, Lord! in the course of our lives we digest stones, that is we support the rudest trials, we repress ourselves on occasions that contradict our inclinations! and in your service we murmur at the least violence we must do to ourselves; we abandon your holy law, we destroy all the good your grace operates in our souls, and we run on insensibly to the term of eternal reprobation.

4. DALETH.—*The tongue of the suckling child hath stuck to the roof of his mouth for*

thirst; the little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it to them.

There is a pressing desire and ardent thirst in all men for immortality, for a life without limit, or alteration; this is *the little one that yearns after the breast, that asks for bread.* When we turn to earth, nothing satisfies our thirst or appeases our hunger. Nature with all its pleasures, gifts, and riches, leaves us in indigence. It is you alone, O Lord! who can satisfy our desires, "you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it reposes in you." (*Aug. Confes.*) Our only occupation on earth shall be to seek you, to approach you, to place our mouth to the inexhaustible source of all good, which is yourself. *My soul,* said the prophet, *hath thirsted after the strong living God,* a thirst which I have often experienced, but have not endeavored to exercise. Give it to me, O Lord!

open my heart to the only desire of loving and possessing you.

5. HE.—*They that were fed delicately have died in the streets; they that were brought up in scarlet, have embraced the dung.*

The great in this world are generally the poorest and the most imperfect in the ways of salvation. *They perish with hunger in the streets*, that is, in the midst of their pleasures, projects, and affairs. They never enjoy true contentment, they appear in grandeur, and their inclinations are base and contemptible; a true figure taken from the history of the kings of Judah, who brought down the vengeance of God on themselves by their idolatry, who delivered themselves to all the abominations of the Gentiles, who despoiled the temple of God to satisfy the avarice of the Gentiles that were armed against them, who employed the authority they were invested with, only to

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persecute the prophets, and pervert their followers; they were hated by all good men, despised by their enemies, cursed by God, captives in a strange land, and branded with ignominy in the holy books; oh, how little true glory is known by the great ones of this world! They confound pride with glory, they cannot comprehend that the more we increase in true merit, the more pride will decrease in us, that honor, properly speaking, is only a name beginning and ending in vanity, that the world is prodigal in flattery only to regret its eulogies, and that in secret it recompenses itself, for the necessity it finds of adoring the idols which it despises. These philosophical reflections are more luminous when we place them in a religious point of view. They teach us that true glory consists in humility, and humiliations united to the sufferings of Jesus

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Christ—that the cross, the object of derision to the Gentiles, and scandal to the Jews, is the work of the wisdom and power of God; that those alone deserve to be great before God and man who glorify in nothing but Jesus Christ crucified.

6. VAU.—*And the iniquity of the daughter of my people is made greater than the sin of Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment, and hands took nothing in her.*

Jeremy declares, that the iniquity of Jerusalem must necessarily exceed the sin of Sodom, because the latter city did not experience the horrors of a gradual destruction, her lot having been decided in a moment, whilst Jerusalem was destroyed by little and little, and suffered all the scourges of famine, war, the sword, and fire. Another reason for believing that the iniquity was more complete, was, that the duration of her calamities, to-

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gether with the admonitions of her prophets, had failed to excite her to repentance. Nothing can be more deplorable than that sufferings should exasperate, instead of converting us, and that we should become hardened in sin, in proportion as the Lord strikes us; like Pharaoh, whom the plagues of his country served to render more impious, and whose obstinacy could be subdued only by the waves which engulfed both him and his army.

7. ZAIN.—*Her Nazarites are whiter than snow, purer than milk; more ruddy than the old ivory, fairer than the sapphire.*

Jeremy declares, that the most esteemed and revered men of the nation, such as the Nazarites, were as much degraded as the rest in the fall of Jerusalem, as he explains in the following verse:—

8. HETH.—*Their face is now made blacker than coals, and they are not known in the*

streets ; their skin hath stuck to their bones, it is withered, and is become like wood.

The picture which the Prophet draws of these Nazarites in the preceding verse, should not be understood of their exterior. They were not voluptuous men. They abstained from many things which were allowed the other Israelites. Jeremy therefore desires to say, that these Nazarites, who heretofore enjoyed public favor, had now become despicable, either because they participated in the sins of the nation, or because no account was made of them in the general calamity. One of the greatest proofs of the decay of religion, is the obscurity and contempt into which its ministers fall. When those lights are either extinguished, or only shed a feeble glimmering, the people of God fall into darkness. Heresies and schisms have commenced by the degradation of the sacerdotal order, and the

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extinction of monastic societies. Woe to this order, and to those societies, if they have given cause for their destruction; but equal woe to the people, if they do not distinguish the importance and necessity of a ministry, from the weakness into which the clergy may fall! Woe to them if they have not learned to reform instead of to destroy, and to burn the chaff in order to preserve the good grain!

Lord! it does not become me to anticipate thy judgments. I should simply compare myself to those Nazarines of whom the Prophet speaks.* Who can discover in me the profession of sanctity which I have chosen by your grace, and in which you desire that I should persevere until death? Where is the candor of my soul, the purity of my intentions,

* The author applies those remarks to himself as a priest, and a religious man.—*Trans.*

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the fervor of my love, the strength of my resolutions, the reserve over my senses, the circumspection of my words, the modesty of my exterior? What am I, O my God? Ah! I can make in your presence, and with all truth, the avowal which St. Ephrem did, for his own humiliation and confusion. "When I am not flattered, my self-love revolts. I live in idleness, and if another refuses to labor in my service, I am transported with anger. I exact from them all deference and attention. I despise those who are above me; I censure them in their absence, and in their presence I basely flatter them. How many thoughts have I against the law, the prophets, the apostles, the gospels, the ministers of the church, the pastors of souls! Who can number the frivolous ideas which occupy my imagination, the distractions which trouble me at prayer, or the slanders

in which I indulge? If a person relates profane histories I listen to him with pleasure; but if I be spoken to on temperance, on solitude, or a flight from the world; such discourse has no charms for me. I shun the reading of holy books, but I anxiously listen to those which treat of public or private grievances, of politics, or of war. I seek for pretexts to be dispensed from assisting at pious assemblies. I enter the temple of the Lord against my will, and I hunt after all parties of pleasure which withdraw me from solitude. I love good cheer, am tepid in prayer, interested in my manner of treating my neighbor, insensible to the calamities of others, strict in exacting kindnesses as if they were my due, imprudent in interfering with the affairs of others and sharing in their faults, fruitful in useless projects, prompt in getting into disputes, and obstinate in

my manner of conducting them. Such is my life, such are my actions."

It is many years, O my God! since I have read this extract, in which the simplicity, the candor, and the humility of a holy solitary are so conspicuous. I might heighten the picture, if self-love did not restrain my pen; and before your dread tribunal you will reproach me with still more infidelities than I should be able to discover in the most rigorous examination of my life.

9. TETH.—*It was better with them that were slain by the sword, than with them that died with hunger; for these pined away, being consumed for want of the fruits of the earth.*

This verse may be very suitably applied to tepid and careless souls. It would often be almost desirable that they should fall into some great fault to remind them of their misery, and to

force them in some measure to abandon the unhappy state of indifference in which they live. The daily faults which they commit, do not move them, they constantly increase them, and are insensible to the chaos of infidelities, which is forming around them. If they receive the sacraments, they do so without true piety, and without remorse for their tepidity. If they meet with occasions of dissipation, they are most careful to profit by them; and if the recollection of great truths sometimes astonishes them, they know how to tranquillize their conscience by vain pretexts. They thus advance to the end of their career, always weak and always unfruitful; and their reprobation is completed by some notable prevarication which they have not time to expiate. In heaven there are none but souls that were persevering in fervor, or courageous in penance, and hell

is filled with cowards, who have by little and little abandoned the ways of justice.

10. JOD.—*The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.*

These expressions of the Prophet are most forcible. He calls those unhappy mothers *pitiful* and *compassionate*, who slaughtered their children and fed on their flesh. It was because they preserved those hapless infants from days that would be still more fatal than death. We must sacrifice and immolate every thing that is most dear to us, to preserve ourselves from spiritual famine. We must renounce the most tender inclinations, and the most intimate affections. Benjamin, the most beloved of the children of Jacob, was left behind in Egypt, because the holy family required bread for their support. Let us abandon every

thing in order to obtain the bread of life, which is Jesus Christ, and his holy love.

11. CAPH.—*The Lord hath accomplished his wrath, he hath poured out his fierce anger; and he hath kindled a fire in Sion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof.*

The Lord is slow in his vengeance; but when the moment for displaying it has arrived, he destroys all: he is a devouring fire, as the Apostle expresses it. (Heb. xii. 29.) Hence this great doctor of nations concludes, that *we must serve God with reverence and in the manner that he pleases.* There is a fear which is not pleasing to God; that is, the fear of mere slaves, of those grovelling and cringing souls, who look to nothing but chastisements; who would abandon themselves to crime, if God did not appear armed with thunder; who never wean themselves from affection to sin, because they do not contemplate the supreme beauty

of God, because they have no relish for his justice or his love. Inspire me, O Lord! with the fear of your holy name, but never let this fear be separated from your love! May I always look upon you as my judge, but, at the same time, as my father also. You are *a consuming fire*; but you are so, more by the flames of charity, than those of your vengeance. Jerusalem would not have felt your anger, if she possessed this holy charity; and hell would not be hell, if a spark of this holy love could find admission there. Consume, then, every thing that is in me; devour my evil thoughts by this sacred fire; destroy them to the very roots, as you have destroyed the foundations of that city which called forth the tears of your prophet.

12. LAMED.—*The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the*

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enemy should enter in by the gates of Jerusalem.

This city was under the protection of the Lord; its temple was the place He had chosen for the centre of true religion. They could not be persuaded that God would ever abandon to idolaters the dearest portion of his inheritance. This is because we do not know, and, indeed, never will fully know, except in the next life, the malice of sin, and the insult it is to the majesty of God. I speak particularly of the public sins—of the sins of a whole nation—of sins that destroy the true worship of the Lord, such as idolatry, apostasy, heresy, and schism. Such also is the scandal given by dissolute morals, by plunder, by ambition, by inhumanity. These are the crimes that draw down, even in this life, the scourges of God's anger, and destroy empires and states. But, O Lord! what will not likewise be

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the surprise of the assembled world before your tribunal, when they shall behold so many Christians, so many ministers of the sanctuary, so many persons consecrated to solitude, a prey to your eternal vengeance! What confusion for those unhappy men, to see the mask with which they were covered, fall off on a sudden; to lose, before the assembly of all nations, the esteem which they had enjoyed on earth; and to suffer those chastisements from which we should imagine the sanctity of their state would have preserved them! O God! what an imperfect notion we have of true honor, of pure and unadulterated glory! We do not wish to appear culpable in the eyes of our relatives or friends; and yet we do not fear the exposure of our consciences, of our crimes and transgressions, in presence of all men who have been, who now are, and who shall exist to the consummation

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of ages! Where is our reason? Where is our faith?

13. MEM.—*For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquity of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her.*

It was the false prophets who fascinated Jerusalem; it was by wicked priests that good men were persecuted. Jesus Christ himself was exposed to the fury of the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the priests of Jerusalem. A few years after, this city was filled with lying prophets. If I read over the history of the Church, I shall find that great scandals have been chiefly caused by pastors and ministers of the sanctuary, who were unfaithful to the obligations of their state. If there be found in that history, and if there are still found Samuels and Oniases, that is, holy pontiffs and fervent levites, O God! how many sacrificers are there who might be compared to the children of Heli!

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For every Athanasius, we see a Valens and an Ursacius! I have written this, and I am confounded by the remembrance of the holy priests, and the zealous defenders of your worship. What have I done, O Lord! in your house? What strayed sheep have I brought back to your bosom? What victories have I obtained over the enemies of your name? What examples have I given to your people? What maxims have I not either introduced or followed, to widen that way which is essentially narrow, and to ease a journey that will be always difficult, because it can be opened only by the sacrifice of our passions? I refrain, O Lord! from a longer examination. I reserve myself for profound meditation on this verse of your Prophet. It burdens my spirit; it troubles my conscience; but Jerusalem perished only for her unfounded presumption, and her

wicked priests were destroyed only for having despised the reproaches of Jeremy.

14. NUN.—*They have wandered as blind men in the streets, they were defiled with blood, and when they could not help walking in it, they held up their skirts.*

It is doubtful whether he here speaks of the priests, who, according to the preceding verse, had shed the blood of the just, or alludes to the whole nation, and to his fellow-citizens, who were really guilty of many outrages against the just. It is more probable that the Prophet speaks of the priests: they had shed the blood of good men, and when afterwards walking in the streets, they lifted up their garments for fear of soiling them, or contracting any legal uncleanness. Behold an image of hypocrisy! it commits abominations, and it affects an exterior of regularity. "Hypocrisy," says

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St. Peter Chrysologus, "has this particular quality: to destroy virtue, it makes use of the very sword of virtue itself; it destroys fasting by fasting; and extinguishes prayer by prayer. It annihilates mercy by compassion." (*Serm. 7.*)

The meaning of this is, that hypocrisy ministers to its corrupt desires by all the appearances of virtue. Jesus Christ has anathematized the hypocritical Pharisees. Hypocrisy was the vice of this sect, as it was of all the pretended reformers of the Church. They have rent the garment of this holy mother of the faithful, whilst they pretended to be anxious to remove only the stains. They have burned the temple of God, and said they wished only to purify it. They have seduced entire nations by the appearances of regularity, and whilst the Gospel was always in their mouths, they corrupted the true doctrine of Jesus Christ. To this hypocrisies has

succeeded another, which is still more dangerous; that is, incessant talk about humanity, the social virtues, beneficence; raising up philosophers, who have the credit of practising these virtues; establishing universal tolerance for all religions, so as to recognize no error, except intolerance. According to this system, there would be no difficulty in preferring Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, or the Emperor Julian, to the heroes of Christianity, even to the Apostles themselves. Nothing but the ill-humor of enthusiasm, forsooth, is to be found in the preachers of the faith, and the founders of religious societies, whilst every thing is admired in the masters of Pagan philosophy. This system pretends to explain all miracles by natural causes; and, in order to undermine the facts of religion, exaggerates all the uncertainties of history. Every thing is described in

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a kind of language that is set off by the colors of virtue; whilst, in reality, no worship, no hope, no principles are left to mankind; no solid link to society; no consolation to persecuted virtue; no restraint to headlong and impetuous vice; no lights to reason; no repose to conscience; no supremacy to God.

15. SAMECH.—*Depart you that are defiled, they cried out to them. Depart, get ye hence, touch not: for they quarrelled, and being removed, they said among the Gentiles: He will no more dwell among them.*

Here is a dreadful threat addressed to those who were consecrated to the service of the Lord. They are told that God will no longer dwell amongst them, that they will be deprived of his lights, and that they will no longer have his grace to instruct the people. This is what still happens to the priests of the

new covenant, when they lose sight of their obligations, when they are addicted to the world, when they cease to be men of prayer. They still preserve their rank, their dignities, their temporal goods; but *God does not dwell amongst them*. They are like those *tinkling cymbals* of which the Apostle speaks; their discourses merely create a noise, but carry persuasion to no breast. If they had all the eloquence of angels they would make no impression upon hearts. And why? It is, again, because *God does not dwell amongst them*; because they possess no longer that precious seed of charity which fructifies to eternal life; it is because by their conduct they oppose the holy doctrine of the cross. The world was converted by fishermen in whom *God dwelt*, and it has been perverted in the midst of a multitude of orators in whom *God no longer dwells*. O Lord! do not abandon the

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ministers of your holy word. Revive amongst them the simplicity of your first disciples; pour into their hearts the love of your eternal beauty, of your infallible truth: let there proceed from their mouths that *two-edged sword which penetrates to the inmost recesses of the soul*. (Heb. iv. 12.) O God! you are charity! This is your name, your holy name, your name by excellence. Enkindle this divine charity in all those who announce you; it will then be truly said, *that you dwell in them*; for, according to your Apostle, *he that abideth in charity abideth in you, and you in him*. (John iv. 16.)

16. PHE.—*The face of the Lord hath divided them, he will no more regard them: they respected not the persons of the priests, neither had they pity on the ancients.*

In the preceding verses, the Prophet speaks against those priests who were unworthy of their ministry. His anger

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seems now to be excited against those dispersed and captive Jews who insulted the ministers of religion; and it is apparently in order to teach his contemporaries and all posterity, that persons dedicated to the altar are always respectable, although their conduct should otherwise render them worthy of censure. They are always the men *who are seated on the chair of Moses*, (Matt. xxiii. 2;) they always bear the ark of the covenant; they are always the anointed of the Lord. Let us leave to God, and to the Church, the judgment of these masters in Israel. Their ministry is holy, their yoke is heavy, their censors are often too strict and inexorable. If we are honored with the awful dignity of the priesthood, let us not abuse the veneration of the people; let us judge ourselves with rigor, in proportion to the respect we receive from them. Let us not forget the excel-

lent advice of St. Gregory—"that the pastor of souls should be pure in his thoughts, efficacious in his actions, reserved in his silence, useful to others in his discourse, always ready to sympathize with the afflictions of his neighbor, devoted above all others to prayer, a faithful friend to the good, attentive in recalling those who go astray, careful in preserving a recollected spirit whilst engaged in his exterior duties, and mindful of those duties whilst he is interiorly engaged."

17. AIN.—*While we were yet standing, our eyes failed, expecting help for us in vain, when we looked attentively towards a nation that was not able to save.*

This verse means, that Jerusalem had expected the assistance of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, an assistance which had not yet arrived, and which, moreover, would have been unable to save her. This is

the state of a dying sinner. He puts his trust in the skill of physicians; he looks for human consolations; he constantly flatters himself. But, vain hopes! the fatal moment has come, and the unhappy wretch is precipitated into hell. What follows is perfectly adapted to this moral.

18. SADE.—*Our steps have slipped in the way of our streets, our end draweth near: our days are fulfilled, for our end is come.*

When the end of the dying sinner approaches, all his faculties are weakened; his memory, his understanding fail, his last hour has come, and his unhappy doom is sealed. The just man is also subject to the infirmities of expiring nature. But it is his last combat, and is to be rewarded by a crown. To be convinced of this, we need but observe the sentiments which occupy his mind before the first change takes place. The wise

man is seated on the bed of pain, as on the summit of a peaceful mountain. His countenance is calm, and his eyes are upturned to heaven. The tumultuous cares of this life are about to be destroyed at his feet. He has foreseen every thing, and prepared every thing for his departure. This moment has occupied the attention of his whole life. He reflects, that his soul is on the point of being reunited to Him, whom alone he loves, whom he prefers to all things. The remembrance of his sins might disturb him; but he has expiated them by repentance, and the image of Jesus Christ crucified, which is placed before his eyes, serves to increase his confidence. He is wont to make a thousand approaches to God at one time, by acts of faith, hope, and love, at another, by acts of humility and sorrow, and again, by acts of consecration and sacrifice. He knows his re-

ligion, he knows its excellence and truth; he derives from the last sacraments invincible strength against the assaults of hell. He has during his whole life invoked the protection of the holy friends of God, and he still claims it with gratitude and joy. O Lord! the death of a saint is one of the greatest proofs of the blessed immortality which is designed for us. "I did not know that it was so sweet to die," said a dying saint. This is because faith easily breaks all those chains that bind us to life; it is because your grace, O my God! is poured forth profusely, and without measure, into the soul of a good man, who is about to take possession of your kingdom. *Ah! may my soul die the death of the just!* is the oracle which you heretofore put into the mouth of a man, who was otherwise devoted to iniquity. Balaam pronounced this beautiful sentence, (Numb. xxiii. 10,) to teach

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all ages that so essential a truth should be independent of the perverse dispositions of a false prophet.

19. CAPH.—*Our persecutors were swifter than the eagles of the air: they pursued us upon the mountains, they lay in wait for us in the wilderness.*

These persecutors were the Chaldeans. They everywhere sought for the Jews; and the Romans did the same at the second siege of Jerusalem. These are figures of all the enemies which surround the sinner before the tribunal of God. The devil, conscience, the saints, Jesus Christ, every thing is up in arms against the unfortunate wretch who has neither protection nor refuge. I have made these reflections, after Jeremy, O my God! But I have not yet called to mind the contrast between the good man, who in solitude enjoys his reason, his conscience, and his God, and

the reprobate who at the hour of death finds himself alone with his reason, his religion, and his God. The former enjoys a peace and contentment which we can neither express nor conceive, at least without having experienced it. The latter is overpowered by the weight of his misery. Reason accuses him, religion condemns him, and God avenges on him the rights of both. What a sweet and glorious solitude is that of the just, which reason enlightens, which religion consoles, which God loads with his favors! And what a cruel and shameful solitude is that of the sinner, which finds itself in the midst of three powers whom it has insulted, between three enemies who are united in tormenting it! The good man, when alone with reason, religion, and his God, is more profound in his ideas than all ancient and modern sages. He is more noble in his affections than all

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the potentates of the world; he almost no longer dwells on earth; he is elevated in some manner into the bosom of the divinity; he discovers in the Gospel inexhaustible materials of wisdom, of mercy, and grandeur. How august is this solitude! and how contemptible is the world with all its treasures and charms, when compared to this holy retirement in which the friend of God is concealed! The reprobate, on the contrary, alone with his reason, his religion, and his God, has nothing but a conviction of his misery, nothing but a feeling of despair, for having neglected Him, who alone was worthy of his love. The world has vanished; friends, patrons, flatterers are no more; reason alone remains, religion alone endures, God alone exists, and shall exist for ever; three enraged and implacable conquerors. O what a solitude, my God! the very thought

of it terrifies me; what must it not be then to feel it!

20. RES.—*The breath of our mouth Christ the Lord is taken in our sins, to whom we said: Under thy shadow we shall live among the Gentiles.**

Many interpreters are of opinion, that Jeremy here foresaw in spirit, our Lord Jesus Christ. In truth, all the expressions are adapted to him. He is the true *Christ*, and the true *Lord*. He was taken and delivered up for our sins. It is under his *shadow* we must live amongst

* This verse literally refers to king Sedecias, who, whilst attempting his escape, was made prisoner in the desert, as is related in the Fourth Book of Kings, chap. xxx.; and in Jeremy, lli. 6. He is called *Master* or *Lord*, because he reigned over the nation; and *Christ*, because he received the royal unction. It is said that he was *the breath* of the people's soul, because they imagined their safety was connected with the life of this prince. After he was taken, the Jews still flattered themselves with being able to live under the *shadow* of his dignity, in the land of Chaldaea, but they were disappointed; he was thrown into irons, and had his eyes plucked out.

the nations; and moreover Jeremy was a figure of this Redeemer of the world.

21. SIN.—*Rejoice, and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Hus: to thee also shall the cup come, thou shalt be made drunk, and naked.*

The Prophet here indulges in irony. The Idumæans had been delighted at the misfortunes of Jerusalem, as we may see in the 35th chapter of Ezechiel. Jeremy announces to them the same misfortunes, and thus teaches us that the disgraces of a people give us no right to insult them; that Providence also reserves a scourge for those who rejoice over the fall of their brethren. The devils, who, since their fall, are spirits of wickedness, rejoice at the destruction of souls; but their punishment on this account is not less severe nor eternal.

22. THAU.—*Thy iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Sion, he will no*

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more carry thee away into captivity: he hath visited thy iniquity, O daughter of Idom, he hath discovered thy sins.

This verse affords some consolation to Jerusalem. Her chastisement is complete, she will no more be subject to transigrations, similar to that of Babylon. In her second catastrophe under Titus, the nation was not transported, but dispersed according to the Prophets, and especially according to the predictions of Jesus Christ. With regard to Idumæa, the visit of the Lord was to consummate the entire destruction of its inhabitants. Jeremy had said *her posterity is destroyed, and she shall be no more.* (xlix. 10.) We may even to this day distinguish the Jews although dispersed; but where are the Idumæans? God still cherishes a sort of predilection for the Jewish nation, either that they may be converted, or that they may at least serve as a proof for the reli-

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glory of Jesus Christ. God, with regard to her, is, as the Prophet says, (Ps. vii. 12,) *just, powerful, and patient*; *just* in punishing her deicide; *powerful* in preserving her from mingling with other nations; *patient* in inviting her to repentance.

CHAPTER V.

THIS Chapter is called *the Prayer of the Prophet Jeremiah*, because the Prophet really addresses God in prayer, and reminds him of the history of his people's misfortunes. As Jeremy repeats, in this prayer, the greater part of what he had said in the four preceding chapters—I will not dwell on each verse, but take them three by three, and after having made some reflections upon them, shall conclude this little work with a prayer to our Lord.

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1. *Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us: consider and behold our reproach.*

2. *Our inheritance is turned to aliens: our houses to strangers.*

3. *We are become orphans without a father: our mothers are as widows.*

We may conceive that a people transported into a strange land, and deprived of their country and property, should be deeply afflicted. A catastrophe of this description rarely happens. Emigrations take place, but they are voluntary, or are suggested by the desire of conquest or of possessing fertile countries. Such were the emigrations of those barbarians who inundated the Roman Empire, at the time of its decay. An entire nation made prisoners, and carried out of their own country, is therefore a great and fatal event. But there is another transportation much more important, and which, however, affects us very little, although

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of daily occurrence; namely, the removal of human generations into another life, and this in so limited a number of years. I suppose there are a thousand millions of men on earth; that of these, twenty-five millions die every year, and that in the space of forty years, an entire thousand millions. Here is the whole amount of the existing human race transported into eternity in so short a time! This transmigration is certain; it takes place before our eyes, and from it there is no return. Do we reflect on it? Very seldom, very little, very badly, very late in life. We often defer thinking of it to the moment of our departure. And yet it is a subject whose meditation is so necessary, so easy, and so consoling, when we make it in a spirit of reason and faith!

4. *We have drunk our water for money:
we have bought our wood.*

5. *We were dragged by the necks, we were weary and no rest was given us.*

6. *We have given our hand to Egypt, and to the Assyrians, that we might be satisfied with bread.*

Such is the unhappy condition of exiles. They can get nothing without money, they are treated without humanity, they depend on every one for the necessaries of life. The charms of society, the confidence of the public, the relations of parentage and friendship, no longer exist for them. If there were just men among the Jews, (and who can doubt but there was a considerable number?) the ignominy of banishment did not disturb their peace of mind. They grieved for the nation, or rather for its sins, but they enjoyed the approbation of their conscience, and awaited the fulfillment of the divine promises. When the moment of our death is distinctly

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present to our imagination, we are troubled very little by worldly events. What do I say, O Lord? We find no consolation in the world, except in the thought of death. We say to ourselves in a kind of transport, Yes! this death which the slaves of the world look upon with affright, is nevertheless the crown of life: It heals our wounds, it releases us from captivity, it is the reward of all our cares, of all our labors, of all our hopes. Moreover, what is this moment of death? An atom, an indivisible point: the blow is struck, and it is over; death is already passed whilst it takes place, it is the briefest event of our life. But by our imprudence, our negligence, or rather by our want of faith, and remorse of conscience, we convert death into a phantom, which unceasingly pursues us, we conjure up terrors of which death is not the cause. The Jordan must be crossed to enter the land of

promise. Is that difficult? The Lord cleaves the waters before us, and sends the ark of the covenant with us. Let us proceed under his guidance.

7. *Our fathers have sinned, and are not: and we have borne their iniquities.*

8. *Servants have ruled over us: there was none to redeem us out of their hand.*

9. *We fetched our bread at the peril of our lives, because of the sword in the desert.*

The Jews had brought some provisions with them, and their enemies only sought to plunder them during their journey. They were a vanquished, captive, despised and hated people; neither ill treatment, nor oppression, was spared in their regard. The cause of this public misfortune was of ancient origin. Juda had long been abandoned to idolatry; fathers had given the example to their children, kings to their subjects, priests and levites to the simple people. The entire chastisement

fell on the generation that was contemporary with Jeremiah. Temporal punishments sometimes extend to children on account of the sins of their parents; but spiritual chastisements are always the consequence of personal faults. There are reprobates in hell, whose fathers were saints, and there are saints in heaven whose parents are amongst the damned. Before the tribunal of God, it is the quality of our works which will create the distinction of persons, and the difference of a good or evil destiny for ever.

10. *Our skin was burnt as an oven, by reason of the violence of the famine.*

11. *They oppressed the women in Sion, and the virgins in the cities of Juda.*

12. *The princes were hanged up by their hand: they did not respect the persons of the ancient.*

This is a description of the violence of the Chaldeans towards their captives;

famines, insults to the women and virgins, outrages against the princes, contempt for the ancients. Jeremy omits no circumstance of this violent persecution. The Chaldeans were the scourge employed by God to chastise his people, but this rod was afterwards cast into the fire. Other people were raised up against Babylon, who in her turn became a prey to all the horrors of war. Thus nations successively destroy each other, and these ravages are the consequences of sin. For sin is the source of cruel ambition, of daring presumption, of insatiable avarice, of inhuman ferocity. By sin the world has become a theatre of calamities and a field of blood.

13. *They abused the young men indecently : and the children fell under the wood.*

14. *The ancients have ceased from the gates : the young men from the choir of the singers.*

15. *The joy of our heart is ceased, our dancing is turned into mourning.*

Jeremy has described all these misfortunes by the inspiration of God, for his work forms a part of the sacred Scriptures. Now, according to St. Paul, every thing that these holy books contain, is *profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct unto justice, that the man of God may be perfect and formed to every good work.* (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) We cannot at present remedy the evils which the Jews experienced in their captivity, but the recital of them should make us sensible to the misfortunes of those who are afflicted before our own eyes. How many persons in our cities who are almost as unfortunate as the Jews in Babylon? How many poor creatures perishing with hunger—how many women burdened with children, and with misery—how many young females whose virtue is in

danger—how many young men without education, who are exposed to the danger of libertinism—how many old men groaning beneath the weight of years and infirmities—how many respectable families pining away in secret with a poverty which they dare not avow? These are objects worthy of exciting our compassion, these are opportunities for displaying our goodness of heart.

16. *The crown is fallen from our head: woe to us, because we have sinned.*

17. *Therefore is our heart sorrowful, therefore are our eyes become dim,*

18. *For mount Sion, because it is destroyed, foxes have walked upon it.*

These expressions are intended to describe the abandonment and desolation of this people. Sin is always represented as the cause of their misfortune. In Ezekiel, (xiii. 4,) false prophets are compared to foxes who come out of the desert

to plunder, to deceive, and to carry off their prey. There is nothing so dangerous in the way of salvation, as to meet teachers and guides of this description. Some of them are infected with false doctrine, and endeavor to insinuate themselves into society, by the exterior semblance of wisdom, reformation, and sanctity. They artfully spread their poison—they ravage the flock of the Lord; whilst affecting to conduct them with zeal, and to provide for their safety. Others have souls filled with violent passions, either of avarice, or ambition, or jealousy, or revenge, or incontinence, or libertinism. What artifices do they not employ to obtain their corrupt desires? There are other evil spirits, who sow tares in every place they can reach; whimsical spirits, who give nothing but false decisions, or pernicious counsels; restless spirits, who disturb the repose of

those hearts whose confidence they have gained by surprise; spirits of enthusiasm; who wander from the common route, in order to walk in wonderful and extraordinary ways; suspicious spirits, who teach the simple to distrust every one; gloomy and obscure spirits, who throw clouds of doubt over truths and actions that are otherwise really clear; haughty spirits, who subjugate consciences, and pretend that they should be always referred to as infallible authorities; lively spirits, who always keep souls in a mediocrity not far removed from imperfection; childish spirits, who involve themselves and others in a round of trifles, which are far removed from true virtue. These are all so many false prophets, against whom we must be on our guard, because they have not the spirit of God, nor an upright, steady, intelligent spirit, which would be incapable of wandering, or of

leading others astray. Diffuse, O Lord, through your Church, that spirit which animated your holy prophets, that spirit which was communicated to your Apostles, and whose divine lights have wrought so many wonders in the long succession of ages.

19. *But thou, O Lord, shalt remain for ever, thy throne from generation to generation.*

20. *Why wilt thou forget us for ever? why wilt thou forsake us for a long time?*

21. *Convert us, O Lord, to thee, and we shall be converted: renew our days, as from the beginning.*

22. *But thou hast utterly rejected us, thou art exceedingly angry against us.*

There are four verses in this conclusion, three in the form of prayer, and the last still suggested by a feeling sense of the evils which Jerusalem endures. The Prophet thus mingles confidence with fear;

he prays, and he feels that his condition is deplorable; he conjures the Lord to bestow on her the grace of conversion, and he has always before his mind the excess of her misery. As to the rest, he invariably depends on the great attribute of God—on his eternal existence—on the immutability of his power. *Thou, O Lord, shalt remain for ever, thy throne from generation to generation.*

Yes, great God, this is what essentially distinguishes you from all other beings; you exist by yourself; you are always without the variations of change—without dependence on time or events. You existed when the world was drawn out of nothing, and you will still exist when it shall return to that nothing, from whence it sprung. You are always holy, always powerful, always glorious, always the inexhaustible source of beings and perfections. O Lord! I am by no means surprised

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that the Seraphim cover themselves with their wings before so great a majesty, that they prostrate themselves at the foot of your throne, and repeat the Cantic of *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts!* I acknowledge with them and your Prophet all the grandeur of your divine essence, and of your infinite perfections. You have protected me, and even enlightened me in the explanation of this holy prophecy. Inspire me, like Jeremy, with a feeling sense of my sins, and of all the sins of mankind, my fellow-creatures, and my brethren. Infuse compunction into all those hearts which have forgotten you, and enkindle upon earth the fire of divine charity, that we may all bless you for ever and ever. Amen.



THE
SEVEN WORDS
OF
JESUS ON THE CROSS

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

M. POIROU,
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"I will rejoice at thy words, O Lord ; as one that hath found great spoil."
Psalms cxviii. 162.

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AMONGST those divine recollections, which excite and cherish within the hearts of the faithful, a love for their adorable Saviour, and a confidence in his infinite merits, there is one in particular on which their piety loves to dwell—the remembrance of those seven last words which he has pronounced on the cross. Having been spoken from the summit of this chair of suffering and redemption, the very sight of which has already so deeply moved and expanded their souls, these divine words descend into them, and penetrate them like so many flames, and fill them with an unspeakable mixture of sentiments of wonder, adoration, sorrow, love, confidence, and joy. They are the last words of their Saviour,

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their father, and as it were the legacy of love which he has bequeathed to his dear children, the model of their duties, and the secret of their destiny. Words profound, as well as simple, the precious remembrance and meditation of which, fill their souls with a treasure of hope and consolation.

It was in order to render this meditation more easy and profitable, as well as to gratify a pious request, that this little work has been composed. It will undoubtedly bring forth some edifying fruits, because such is the inevitable consequence of every thing that serves to extend or increase the knowledge of Jesus, and of Jesus expiring on the cross, to whom be honor and love, praise and benediction for ever and ever!

We cannot help contributing to the great gratification of those persons to whom this devotion is dear, by pointing out to them, or recalling to their memory another devotion with which this is confounded, or which is rather the very same, and to which nu-

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merous spiritual favors are attached: we allude to the devotion called, *The Three Hours' Agony of our Lord*. It consists in honoring the three last hours of his life, by reflections on those last moments, and especially on his last words. It took its rise in America, from whence it was brought over to Europe. France has followed the example of Portugal, Spain, Germany, and Italy; and it is now practised in many churches here, by fervent souls.

Pius VII., by a decree of the 14th February, 1815, has granted a Plenary Indulgence to all the faithful, who being contrite for their sins, shall confess and communicate on Holy Thursday, or in Easter week, and shall practise the devotion of the Three Hours' Agony on Good Friday, in public or private, either alone or in company with other persons, under the direction of a clergyman, or with an approved book, which treats of this subject. They should meditate according to their capacity for three hours, on the agony of our

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Saviour, on his sufferings, and the seven words which he spoke on the cross. This exercise should commence at one o'clock, and terminate at four.

On the day they intend to gain the Indulgence, they should pray according to the intention of the Pope. This Indulgence is applicable to the souls in Purgatory.

By renewing this practice in the same manner on the last Friday of every month, we may gain the same Indulgence. Pius VII. has moreover granted an Indulgence of 200 days to those who, on any Friday, shall meditate for a certain time on the agony of our Lord.

It is almost superfluous to remark, that this little book, having been approved, may consequently serve to gain the Indulgences which we have just mentioned.

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THE first observation which presents itself to our mind, when we are disposed to meditate on these divine words, is, that they are seven in number—a number always mysterious in the holy Scriptures, and especially intended to designate any thing perfect in its kind. Thus, there are seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, seven sacraments, seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer, &c., to give us to understand that these gifts, these sacraments, that prayer exhibit a complete catalogue of the ne-

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cessary graces, of the means by which they are communicated, and of the petitions which we should offer to God. Following up this principle we should believe that the seven words of Jesus on the cross, declare to us the mystery of the ~~unspeakable~~ perfection of the dispositions in which he dies, and consequently, present a perfect model of those in which we should die ourselves.

Another very striking circumstance is, that the seven last words of our Saviour, have not been all recorded by any of the four Evangelists. St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, have only related four; namely, the first, second, third, and seventh, whilst the three others are alone mentioned by St. John. Nevertheless, beloved disciple, you were present. Is it possible, then, that you did not hear them all? Could your grief, or perhaps, the heroic effort, which you required to

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follow Mary to the foot of the cross, have made you inattentive, whilst the other words were spoken? Or, rather did your sacred pen, which wrote after the other three Evangelists, merely wish to supply their silence, by relating only the words which they had omitted, in order that the entire should present themselves to our view, in the most moving character, thus extracted word by word, and collected together by us as the scattered shreds of a divine inheritance?

Whatever may be the reason, Christians, we are in possession of them all! We possess this precious whole. Let us adore God, who has pronounced them; let us meditate on the entire, and imprint them on our hearts.

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FIRST WORD.

Father forgive them, for they know not what they do

Luke xlii. 34.

THIS word, pronounced by Jesus whilst they were nailing his adorable limbs to the cross, seems to have been elicited by the very peculiar cruelty with which his impatient executioners expedited the work of punishment, in order to finish their victim. Thus, the first word of this innocent victim is in behalf of his murderers, and this word prays for them, and implores their pardon.

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. The divine Saviour here calls God *his Father*, and not his Lord or his God, as he will do very soon, because it is particularly as a *Father*, that God should be enraged at the insults and death to which his Son is exposed; and by using this sweet name, he desires to

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interpose between his executioners and his Father all the influence which he derives from his title and quality of Son. It is as if he had said, "*Father*, by all the tenderness which you have ever borne to your Son, and bear him even at this moment, I conjure you to forgive them."

The reason which Jesus assigns for obtaining the pardon of his enemies, is, *that they know not what they do*. There were, undoubtedly, amongst those who persecuted the Saviour, a great number who knew not what they were doing, and who had little notion of his heavenly mission, or of his innocence. Such, certainly, were the Romans, and it might be, many of the common people amongst the Jews; nay, even the executioners themselves, who were the governor's soldiers, and, consequently, Romans. The latter, however, could not be entirely

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excusable, on account of the barbarity with which they fulfilled their deicidal office. But as for the scribes, the pharisees, the chief priests, and a great many of the other more intelligent Jews, they either were not in ignorance, or their ignorance was but the voluntary fruit of their passions, their pride, and especially their hatred and jealousy of Jesus Christ; and hence, their ignorance, far from excusing their crime, was in itself an inexcusable crime, and the more grievous, as it drove them to the most violent excesses. It was pride and confidence in their own wisdom, whilst they despised that of God, that made them misunderstand or reject the mysterious wisdom of the Most High, who wished to redeem the world by the humility of his incarnate Son. And it was this also, according to the testimony of St. Paul, which made them crucify the Lord of Glory.

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Let us however be convinced, that **this** merciful prayer was also offered for them. Jesus on the cross was always—nay, more than ever, the God of charity, the unequalled friend, who, as he said himself, was to give his life for his enemies. He had not forgotten also this word which had proceeded from his own lips: If you offer your gift at the altar, and there remember, not that you have any thing against your brother, but that your brother has any thing against you, leave your gift before the altar; go and be reconciled with your brother, and then coming, offer your gift. (Matt. v. 23.) Amiable Jesus, you can no longer, because your hour is come, quit the altar of your sacrifice, to go and be reconciled with those whom you did not disdain to call your brethren, and who prefer being your executioners, instead of treating you like a brother; but your heart at

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least goes in search of them; for an ignorance which is in itself a crime, you make their excuse to your Father, and being at the same time both priest and victim, you do not offer yourself as a holocaust on the cross, until you have implored in their behalf, that pardon which you have yourself already bestowed them.

. But let us not confine the meekness and charity of our Saviour to this point. This divine charity is immense; let us then extend it over the whole world, over all sinners, and ourselves amongst the first. Yes, the greater our sins are, and the more their enormity has caused the sufferings of our Saviour, and rendered his death necessary, the more we should be convinced that it was we who were then present to his mind, we who touched his heart, we, for whom he prayed, and for whom he implored for.

givenness from his Father. O consoling reflection! O fortunate sinners that we are—let us accept this generous pardon which Jesus offers us, let us accept it with confidence. Let us not fear the reproaches of our victim. When we shall have once entered into his peace, into that peace which he procures for us from his Father, he will no longer consider us as his murderers, he will look upon us as his friends, and as friends who are the more worthy of his tenderness, as they have cost him so dearly.

But, after having received this pardon from our divine Saviour and Redeemer, will it be necessary for him to exhort us any longer to forgive our brethren in return? Ah! what an exhortation is this example of a God, and of a God who is put to death for our crimes! Whatever may have been the iniquity

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of their proceedings with regard to us, it is not us, so much as Jesus, whom they have afflicted. Their iniquity, even against us, is one of those sins which caused his death, one of those which he forgives, and for which he implores the forgiveness of God his Father. Shall our persons then be more sacred than that of our adorable Saviour? And shall an injury against us, be in our eyes a greater crime than to have caused his death? Or, in fine, shall our heart be more delicate in its feelings than that of the Saviour himself, so as not to be able to resolve to love those to whom the Lord himself makes a tender of his love? Alas! it is we who should properly undertake to excuse their ignorance. Frequently their unjust proceedings against us spring from error. They imagine we have offended them, when we really have not. Have we never committed the same

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fault ourselves? Do we set ourselves right at this very moment, with regard to those offences which we fancy we have received? Whilst God closes his eyes on their sins and ours, shall we unhappily be too ready to close our eyes with him on our own iniquities, and keep them open on those of our brethren? Ah! if we had faith, we would, instead of nourishing the least resentment against them, love them the more, the more outrages we should suffer from them, because they would have furnished us a more worthy opportunity of resembling this Man-God in the most divine action of which he has left us an example—the pardon of injuries, and the love of enemies.

It is, especially at the hour of death, and before he offers his last sacrifice, that the Christian should remember his enemies, and his Redeemer. It is with them

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he ought to occupy his thoughts before God, after the example of Christ; and it is by forgiving and praying for them, that he should dispose himself to appear before God, who accepts no sacrifice, unless it resembles the sacrifice of his Son, and who will be merciful only to those who have shown mercy from their whole hearts.

SECOND WORD.

Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.

Luke xxiii. 43.

THE executioners have finished their work. The deicidal instrument is raised, and presents Jesus crucified to the sight of his jealous enemies, and of all the blind multitude whom they have excited, and hurried along to be witnesses of his punishment. It was then—it was when they

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saw him nailed to an infamous gibbet, him, who had dared to reproach the pharisees for their hypocrisy, and the people of God with their prevarications, and the house of Israel with its numberless infidelities, him, who had been announced as speaking in the name of God, whose Son he declared himself to be: it was then, that cries and derisions, blasphemies and insults of all kinds arose at every side. "He has saved others, let him now save himself! He said he was the Son of God, let God deliver him now." (Matt. xxvii. 42.) Even one of the two malefactors, who were suspended at each side, thought it to be his duty, in imitation of the multitude, to offer his tribute of insult: "If thou art the Son of God, save thyself, and us." But it was then also that the most moving spectacle was presented to our view. In the midst of the clamor

and invectives of the populace, his companion in punishment rising by faith, says St. John Chrysostom, superior to every thing that his eyes beheld, recognized in Jesus, thus humbled and crucified at his side, the King of Heaven himself, and whilst his most faithful friends deny or forsake him, he alone has the courage to confess him, and to undertake his defence. "Neither dost thou fear God," said he to his companion, "thou that art condemned to the same punishment. As for us, we have deserved our fate; but he whom thou insultest has done no evil." (Luke xxiii: 39.) He then said to Jesus, *Remember me, O Lord, when you shall come into your kingdom!* O what faith! cries out St. Augustine, and what reward does it not receive! And Jesus answered him, *Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.*

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. *This day*, from this very day, and not at a future day, more or less remote, you shall not only be remembered, which is the object of your prayer, but you shall be in my company, of which you deem yourself unworthy. *Thou shalt be with me* in my kingdom, but in a kingdom of which you speak without having as yet little knowledge of it. Know it, therefore: this kingdom is *Paradise*. It is *I*, thy king, who *say it to thee*, and my royal word is, and can be nothing but *truth*.

By the *Paradise*, which was here promised by the Saviour, we must understand, according to the fathers and interpreters, not the paradise of heaven, whither it is certain Jesus did not enter until his ascension, but limbo, where all the souls of the ancient saints were detained; a place which on that day became a place of delights, by the presence of their deliverer, who was so long expected, and

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by the blessed vision of his divinity and glory which he revealed to them.

Now who can express the rapturous surprise and delicious transport, of this happy criminal, at hearing him to whom he had prayed and recommended himself as his king, and as sanctity itself, opening his mouth and answering him, him a vile malefactor, and answering him with an assurance of his royal word, that he would be even that very day in his society, and in Paradise? "You will find no one before this thief," says Chrysostom, "who was judged worthy of receiving such a promise, neither Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Moses, nor the Prophets, nor even the Apostles, but above all, you will find, and only find this thief." What glory! what happiness!

And how did he deserve, or rather how did he bear away so much glory and happiness? By his faith and con

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fidence in Jesus. Faith and hope exalt a vile malefactor, and raise him up to God, because he acknowledged that God, whose charity humbled itself so far, as to be numbered amongst such companions.

Happy are those, O Jesus, who believe and hope in you! If they have to blush for their past life, they need not blush for their faith and hope, because you are the God who are pleased to work miracles of grace and mercy, to sanctify and save those who place their confidence in you! O you, who so often say that you have not to reproach yourselves with robbery and murder, and who on this account consider yourselves infallibly entitled to the rewards of heaven, whilst you refuse to acknowledge this humbled God, this Saviour Jesus, who alone has deserved, and who alone can open heaven for you, how great is your error! It is a great crime, undoubtedly, to deprive

your neighbor of his goods, or of his very life, and those who are guilty of such crimes, and have not done penance, shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven. Such is the fate of the impenitent thief, who died a reprobate, though he died at the side of Jesus. Nevertheless, he could have saved himself, as well as his companion, if he had imitated his faith and his repentance! Every crime and misfortune is repaired by these two virtues. But to refuse to acknowledge Jesus, is the irreparable crime and misfortune. Amongst the Jews, who put our Saviour to death, a great many, no doubt, were as innocent as you. But with all this imperfect innocence, the sole crime of not having adored him, whom the Most High wished that his very angels should adore, has plunged them into hell, whilst the good thief is in heaven.

Do you, O faithful Christians! who have

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the happiness to believe and hope in him, comprehend the entire extent of your bliss? If Christ, in these evil days, is still humbled in the person of those who serve, or who announce him—if his doctrine and his worship are an object of derision to the impious, let your faith raise your hearts above the spectacle by which hell affects to confound you. Think on the mystery of a God, who, in order to accomplish the salvation of the world, wished to be born, to live, and to die in humiliation and contempt. This mystery always remains, and should continue to the end. This is the heavenly mark and character of our faith. You could not be so easily induced to give up a mere earthly opinion. But what earthly opinion could subsist against so much mockery? Continue then, to confess your Saviour Jesus to the end, in your words and works, in the midst of

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the sarcasms and humiliations to which his name and his servants are exposed: make the cry of a lively faith, and an ever-increasing confidence ascend before him. Remember us, O Lord! in your glorious kingdom, and you will certainly be one day admitted by him into paradise and glory.

THIRD WORD.

Woman, behold thy Son....Behold thy Mother.

John xix. 26, 27.

WHEN St. John relates this word of our Saviour, he tells us, that it was addressed successively to his mother and his disciple; but these names of mother and disciple were not pronounced by Jesus. Nevertheless, there is no doubt, but they were well understood by Mary and St. John. Hence, it is he, the be-

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loved disciple alone, who has related them, like a child, who shows with a kind of melancholy pleasure, his precious portion of the paternal inheritance. But how could they know that Jesus spoke to them? Nothing is more easy to comprehend, and nothing is more useful to reflect on.

Mary and John had followed Jesus, even to Calvary. Mary and John were at the foot of the cross of Jesus. From thence their eyes were constantly fixed on the dear and august victim. Mary, in particular, had, if we may say so, the entire possession of his love. Standing near the cross, as the Evangelist tells us, who was himself by her side, notwithstanding her sufferings, her soul had only strength enough to sustain her eyes, and her eyes looked only to afflict and rend her heart. O how sad and afflicted was this blessed mother of an

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only Son, when she beheld this divine Son in torments!

She saw Jesus under the scourges;
she saw this dear fruit of her womb,
expiring and pouring forth his last sigh!
Who would not share in her grief, that
beheld this tender mother, enduring in
herself all the torments of her Son?

Alas! alas! what deep, what poignant grief,
Felt the fond mother of her only born,
In that sad hour, when sunk beyond relief,
She view'd the sufferings of her Son forlorn!

Her trembling frame, with fear and horror shook,
At every wound she writhed with deadly pain,
Her piteous eye expressed in every look,
Her woes too big for nature to sustain.

Ah! say what mortal could unmoved behold,
Christ's sweetest mother, thus with grief oppress'd?
Who would not weep to see the tears that roll'd,
Amid the storm that heaved her sacred breast?

Who could the burst of pious grief restrain?
To view her tender, sympathizing eye,
Speak all the anguish of his bitter pain,
And hear her answer to each groan and sigh?

* Stabat Mater.

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Now, Jesus had seen from the beginning his mother, who was so tender; he had also seen the affliction of his disciple; but before he thought of consoling a mother and disciple that were so dear to him, this Man-God had something else of a more urgent nature to perform; he had then, (O merciful Heart of Jesus!) to pray for his executioners; he had to promise paradise to the sinner, who had acknowledged him for his king on this throne of humiliation and suffering, and Jesus did so. Then he turned towards his mother, and looked upon her. *When Jesus had seen his mother*, (St. John,) their eyes met; and who can tell all the grief and pain which those mutual looks inspired: the pains of the Son in the mother's heart, and those of the mother in the Son's? It was at this moment that the divine Son pronounced that touching word, which Mary, as we have

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perceived, could not but have felt to be addressed to her: *Woman, behold thy Son.* At the same time, his eyes sought St. John, for turning them towards him, and indicating Mary, he said: *Behold thy mother.*

Woman, behold thy Son. As Jesus here discharges a duty of filial piety, we must not imagine that the term of *woman*, and not mother, which he applies to Mary, is a new dart by which he seeks to wound and probe her maternal heart. Indeed, this appellation did not, amongst the ancients, and especially the Jews, denote that coldness and want of feeling, as it were, which it does amongst us. It was thus they addressed persons of the highest rank, without excepting even queens themselves, every time that they had reasons for not addressing them by any other denomination, or when this title was better suited to the subject which

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they wished to introduce. Now these two circumstances seem to have existed in this case. The Saviour had reasons for not calling Mary his Mother: he would have exposed her to the insults and annoyance of his executioners, and of all his enemies, and moreover, this very name would tend, perhaps, to augment, and not mitigate, her sorrow. But independently of this motive, the name of *woman* is more suited to that filial interest which Jesus felt in her regard. The weakness of a woman, and the consideration that is due to it, require that she should have support and protection. Although Mary was the valiant woman by excellence, Jesus had hitherto discharged this pious duty towards her. Jesus is about to die, and is naturally anxious to choose a person to succeed him, and his choice falls upon St. John, whom he gives to his mother,

as her support and consolation. *Woman, behold thy son*—Virgin disciple, it is with great propriety a virgin mother is confided to thy care. *Behold thy mother*. Nevertheless, whatever may have been the intention of Jesus, it is quite evident that this language, and this very concern, should make a most sorrowful impression upon the heart of this tender mother. What a change was it not for her? Ah! whatever might be the qualities of a stranger, however worthy he might be of esteem and affection, it is not at the moment when a mother loses a son, (and what a mother, what a son!) that she is to be told to transfer, or at least to extend her maternal affection to another. Nevertheless, this is what took place at the foot of Calvary. For the word of the Man-God is not like that of a mere man, a simple and ineffectual recommendation. It is a word as efficacious as

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that which created the world, as that which formed the hearts of the mother and the son, and which producing there in the very thing which it signifies, inspires Mary with a new and maternal affection for St. John, and St. John with a new and filial affection for Mary. And from that moment, as he himself tells us, the disciple took her for his own, and treated her as his mother.

Happy disciple! how sweet in the midst of affliction must have been to your ear this word of a master who loved you! this word which selected you for Mary, in place of Jesus, to be the brother and the successor of Jesus, the son and the consoler of Mary! Such therefore is the reward of your purity, of your love for Jesus, and above all, of that heroic fidelity to him which you displayed, by following him with his holy mother, even to the foot of his

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cross, when his other disciples had abandoned him!

Happy are we also, Christians! happy is our lot! For it is not with St. John alone that the heart of Jesus is concerned, but with all those whom he did not disdain to call his brethren. With St. John, and in his person, are included all the Apostles, and all the faithful, whom Jesus bestows as children to Mary, according to the unanimous declaration of the fathers. Mary is the mother of all the faithful, but more especially, more affectionately, more maternally of those who imitate the purity of St. John, and his love for Jesus, and who like him accompany Mary to Calvary, and sympathize with her in his sufferings:—

Fond Mother! thou, whose love was love indeed

Oh! give me by one sweet, resistless prayer,

Whilst meditation sees thy Jesus bleed,

In thy vast agony of grief to share!

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Give me, in loving Ch.^{ist}, my God, my All,
To feed the ever-glowing, sacred flame!
And whilst unwearied at his shrine I fall,
To make his love my sole, my glorious aim !*

Let us make another reflection. The holy fathers, and particularly St. Augustine, have not failed to present this word of Jesus on the cross to his mother, as an example and instruction for all children, that even to their last breath, and in the midst of the greatest suffering, they should remember the authors of their existence, and furnish them with all the consolation in their power. Let us add, that the words addressed by Jesus to his faithful disciples, from the summit of his cross, is an example and instruction to all friends. Hence, as our friends attach so much importance to the last recollections, and particularly to the last words of a dying friend, and as they feel

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so great a pleasure in recalling them to memory, we owe them this consolation, for the enjoyment we have experienced in their friendship. It would be hard-heartedness and ingratitude to neglect them on our death-bed. But, according to the example of Jesus, let not our friends, nor even our parents, obtain precedence of our enemies.

FOURTH WORD.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Matt. xxvii. 46; Mark xv. 34.

A GOD complains; his sufferings, therefore, must be great. O you who pass by the way, come and see, if there be any sorrow like to his sorrow. (Lamentat. i. 12.) And to what, indeed, can we compare it? Is it to the sorrow of the two culprits, who are suffering the same pun-

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ishment at each side of him? But what a difference! They were far from being put to death, like Jesus, for their sanctity and innocence. They had not, from the evening before, experienced that mortal sadness which covered the whole body of our Saviour with a bloody sweat. They had not been sold by one friend, abandoned by others, and betrayed by a kiss. They had not been for an entire night, during which the only nourishment Jesus took, was to do his Father's will, barbarously dragged from one tribunal to another—from the sanguinary high priest to the timid governor—from this weak governor to a deriding king, and sent back again from this insulting king to the unjust governor, by whom, after having proclaimed his innocence, he is condemned to death. They had felt none of that atrocious scourging, in which the executioners, forgetful of humanity, and

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the very law itself, which forbad them to inflict more than fifty stripes on a culprit, had inflicted a countless multitude of scourges on Jesus, and rendered his entire body one immense wound. They had not borne the instrument of their punishment on a mangled and bleeding body—they had not thrice fallen under the heavy weight of their crosses and sufferings—the Jews had not hurried their crucifixion with that ferocious impatience which they showed to Jesus. It was well for them, that their executioners were otherwise engaged on that day—they were entirely occupied with Jesus alone. It was into his head that they had driven the crown of thorns. For Jesus alone they reserved their cruel blows, their vile phlegm, their clamors, their insults, their blasphemies, and outrages of every description. Jesus alone had his mother at his feet, whilst he was dying. Added

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to this, the extraordinary sensibility which must have been felt by his divine body, the perfect organization of which was not deranged by the shadow of sin, or excess.

Pilate was apparently ignorant of, or at least forgot all these circumstances, when he was astonished in the evening, that Jesus was already dead, whilst the two thieves were still breathing. Who does not see that in this long series of moral and physical suffering, Jesus had endured a thousand times more than was sufficient to cause his death, if he had not been pleased to retard it, that he might suffer more, by a more than human power?

For our parts, without sharing in this astonishment of Pilate, let us take advantage from it, by reflecting, that above all the miseries which we have described, this divine Saviour had experienced another

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suffering, of which the former present us but a faint image. Yes, ye blind and barbarous Jews, open your prophets, and you will see that in persecuting this God-Man, your hands inflict only the second blows upon him. An invisible hand has already stricken him: an invisible hand has inflicted those internal wounds upon him, to which you have only added, *Because they have persecuted him whom thou hast smitten.* (Ps. lxxviii. 27.) But, can I describe, O Lord, these divine and invisible wounds? And yet I ought to do so, for they are the work of my hands. These wounds are *the iniquities of us all, whom God has placed upon Jesus.* (Isa. liii. 5.) O God! what a frightful burden! All the sins of all men, all the iniquities, all the atrocious deeds, all the horrors which have been, and will be committed to the end of the world, proceeding from the hearts of all men, like so many im-

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pure serpents come to take refuge in the heart of Jesus. Ah! behold what rends and torments his heart more than the scourges, the thorns, and the nails, more than all the phlegm and insults! Behold what covers his sacred face with an incomprehensible shame! *Confusion has covered my face.* (Ps. xviii.)

Shame! what a torment shame is, when it enters into the presence of virtue! What a torment then must not the confusion of Jesus, who was innocence itself, have been, when he appeared loaded with crimes, in the presence of a thrice holy God!

To his confusion add his suffering—and what suffering! A suffering which is necessary before God's justice, to expiate those very crimes of which we have spoken. Now, though the imagination is incapable of representing to itself all the immensity of our Saviour's suffering, yet it can go so far as to be overwhelmed

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by the idea which it may conceive of it. The contrition, which we cold and insensible sinners feel for our crimes, is a sorrow that rarely affects our sensitive part. It is frequently no more than a mere affection of the spirit, which considers it the greatest of all misfortunes to have offended God. And blessed be the God of Mercy, his goodness is satisfied with this sorrow. Heaven forbids to deliver ourselves up to a sorrow whose liveliness would interfere with our existence, or our health. But if God spares us in this manner, he has done so at the expense of his own Son, and Jesus Christ has endured for our sakes, that bitter and profound grief, which made his *soul sorrowful, even unto death.*

That perfect contrition, which certain souls who are deeply penetrated with grief for their offences against God, feel in such a manner as to cause their death,

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was felt by Jesus Christ for all men, and for each of them in particular, and felt for each of them to such a degree, as none amongst them could bear. This is true to such an extent, that it would not be too much to say, that if the grief which afflicted the heart of Jesus were distributed amongst all mankind, who have ever existed, or who shall ever exist, it would be enough to cause their death. O sinner, meditate for an instant, at least, on this abyss of sorrow!

Our generous Saviour, Jesus Christ, up to this moment surmounted this grief, and expanding his great soul, and his immense love, he extended them like a net-work of mercy on all men together, by praying for his executioners. From thence, without however for a moment losing sight of the entire world, whom he redeems, his thoughts are fixed on a penitent sinner, then on his mother, and

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on his friend. They at length were directed to himself, at this moment. It was then, that weighed down by a consciousness of his evils, and as if, affrighted at his own appearance, instead of merely speaking, he *cries aloud*, as the Evangelist informs us, and throws himself, if we may say so, into the bosom of God, of that God who had stricken him, to implore consolation. It is to him that he addresses himself, and with him he is henceforward to treat, even to his last sigh.

My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me? My God, my God—it is no longer, My Father. Jesus no longer beholds in him a father. Did a father ever treat his only son in such a manner? He sees in him only an avenging God, whose paternal tenderness has vanished, and who no longer feels any thing but implacable resentment for a son, who

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is charged with the iniquities of those who have offended him. This is what he wishes to express by these words: *Why hast thou forsaken me?* for God was always with him; but it was from this very divine presence that sprung the immensity of his sufferings, and the strength by which he was enabled to endure them.

But let us more deeply examine this adorable complaint. We see that it is couched in an interrogation. Was Jesus, then, ignorant of the cause of this divine abandonment? Undoubtedly not. Why, therefore, does he inquire, and why is the inquiry permitted without a reply? This is a mystery—but it is one which we can easily penetrate. Jesus asked why his God had forsaken him, in order to excite our attention, and to teach us that it is our duty to inquire into the cause, and to reflect upon it. He does not answer,

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in order that we may answer in his place. Or rather, Jesus Christ has given an excellent answer himself. But in what manner? Let us read the twenty-first psalm, from which this complaint is extracted, and which Jesus seems to have entirely recited during his Passion. There we see, that after these words which form the very commencement of the psalm; *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* it is immediately added, *the cry of my sins are far from my deliverance.*

Behold then this reply, which should be ours, and which is really ours, because Jesus, who was sanctity itself, had no other sins but our sins; but this answer he made in the silence of grief, and of the most profound confusion, and he continues to sigh before his God, and to invoke his assistance, with the greatest fervor, and the most touching language,

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as we may perceive in the remainder of the psalm, the length of which alone prevents us from quoting it here at full.*

What a lesson, Christians, and at the same time, what a consolation is afforded us by this word of the Man-God! The Son of God, the Just, the Holy One by excellence, meets with a total abandonment on the part of his Father, because he is loaded with our sins. Shall we, sinners—shall we, the enemies of the Most High God, dare to pretend that he would never

* This is the psalm which is commonly called the *Psalm of the Passion*, because our Saviour pronounced its first words on the cross, and because throughout it the psalmist evidently speaks of the person of the future Messiah, whose persecutions and sufferings he recounts with such minuteness of detail, as to relate the casting of lots amongst the soldiers for his garments. Now, we cannot doubt but that our Saviour addressed to God, during his mortal life, and at suitable times and places, those prayers which the Holy Ghost had previously prepared for his lips, by the ministry of his prophets. There is nothing, therefore, more probable, nor more edifying to believe, than that this Man of Sorrows, during his Passion, recited the entire of this psalm, as he has here quoted its opening words.

chastise us? And what would become of us, if his Son did not endure his anger for our sakes? And what shall become of us, if we know not how to profit by the sufferings and patience of his Son, by submitting patiently to our own sufferings, after his example?

Nevertheless, the Man-God complains and sighs under the blows of the paternal hand. We, therefore, weak dust and ashes, are allowed to complain, when God strikes us in our turn. But to whom shall we complain, except God himself, in imitation of Jesus? But as was the case with Jesus, and will be so with us for a much better reason, we shall hardly have opened our mouths when we must close them again, to listen within us to this withering answer—“*It is the cry of your sins that has brought these chastisements upon you?*”

Nevertheless, how great soever our

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sins may be, let us never despair, but continue to pray like our Saviour, with fervor and confidence, and that God, who immediately hastens to console, will comfort us at least at the moment appointed by his mercy. Let us also remark, that in order to express his grief to the Lord, Jesus employs the language of the Holy Ghost. Let us make use of the holy Scriptures in our prayers. It alone has consoling expressions, *words sweeter than honey*, says the psalmist. Let us above all make use of those which we have heard Jesus pronounce—*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Oh! how attentive will not God be to a complaint which the mouth of his expiring Son resounded in his ears! Let us pronounce these words particularly upon our bed of agony. He will imagine that he still hears the sound of the voice of his agonizing Son. On our bed of agony

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likewise, let us, after having discharged our duty towards men, entertain ourselves with God alone, even to our last breath.

FIFTH WORD.

I thirst.—*John xix. 28.*

THIS thirst which Jesus feels, is at the same time both natural and mysterious. In addition to his having taken nothing since the evening before, the quantity of blood which he had lost, the excessive pain which he had undergone, were sufficient to cause an extreme thirst. For, as St. Cyril remarks, it is the peculiar effect of intense pain to excite the natural heat so strongly as to absorb the interior liquids, and set the entrails on fire. Hence, from the dryness of the palate and mouth, arises a consuming thirst, which nothing can extinguish. Then indeed

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was fulfilled to the letter in our Saviour, that expression of the 21st Psalm, which perhaps he recited at the moment he spoke this fifth word—*My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws.* (v. 16.)

Every one is more or less acquainted with the suffering which is occasioned by thirst. But it is those particularly who have felt it, in some illness, that can form a just idea of it. Hence a pious person, who was tormented on his death-bed with a similar heat and thirst said, that he had never comprehended, until then, those words of the psalmist, which he was fond of repeating—*My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws.* And he said he judged by this torment what that of our Saviour had been.

But at best we should only imperfectly comprehend this divine torment, if we

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consider it merely as a natural thirst. Entirely engaged as he is in accomplishing every iota of his Father's will, the thoughts of Jesus running through, if we may say so, all the oracles that related to him, perceived there was one, which as St. John tells us, was not yet fulfilled. It had been foretold, that *in his thirst they should give him vinegar to drink*, (Ps. lxxviii. 26,) and he immediately says, *he is thirsty*. His executioners then fulfilled the prophecy, and presented him vinegar to drink: that Jesus tasted it, and that his pains were thereby increased, is something of moment, without doubt, but almost nothing in addition to so many sufferings. Moreover, it was not to those who surrounded him that he particularly declared *his thirst*. The word, which he here pronounces, is not addressed like the preceding, to some particular persons. It is a sigh which

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issues from the bottom of his agonizing soul, at the remembrance of his God, and of the redemption which he is achieving, a sigh that is directed at the same time to heaven and earth, to God and man, to all mankind, and particularly to all sinners. If he *thirsts*, it is for the return of paternal tenderness, and of those consolations of God, who has forsaken him. If he *thirsts*, it is because he sees the friendship of God, at length taking the place of his wrath, and extending itself to all those whom he has redeemed at the price of his blood. If he *thirsts*, it is to see all men hastening to him, to unite themselves to him, to enter into him, that with him, and in him, and by him, they may receive the mercy which he implores; and to give here, at least, some idea of the untranslatable expression of a holy father, *he thirsts*, in order to be himself the object of our thirst. SITIT

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SITIRI. (*St. Greg. Naz.*) He *thirsts* for the conversion of sinners—he *thirsts* for the perseverance of the just—he *thirsts* for the salvation and happiness of the entire world.

But, O bitter potion, which Jesus has to drink! So many blind and hapless sinners, who regret his light and his knowledge! So many sinners who refuse to love him, and who die impenitent! So many souls that shall fall into hell in spite of all he has done to save, and purchase heaven for them, despite of his crucifixion, despite of his passion, despite of his love, despite of that *thirst* for their salvation, by which he is consumed! To have done so much for so many sinners, and to have done so much in vain! O incomprehensible torment! O sinner, sinner, how hard and insensible must be your heart! O God my Saviour, must you love me in such a

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manner as to have so scorching a thirst for my salvation! And shall I neglect you, shall I not think of you, shall I thus quench your thirst with vinegar and bitter gall? No, O Lord! far from me be the guilt of cruelty towards you, and cruelty towards myself. O, I wish, I wish at least to assuage your pains, by laboring for my own salvation! I desire at least to diminish your thirst, by giving you my soul to drink! And why can I not at the same time present you with it the souls of all my brethren? Why can I not give you the whole world? O that I could thus feel and share in this divine thirst all the moments of my life! O that I could experience it at the hour of my death! Yes, Lord, when I will have to submit in my turn to that sentence pronounced against all men, and even against yourself by your Father; when I shall have to die, not on

a cross like you, not with my hands and feet pierced with nails, (for that would be too glorious a punishment,) but on a bed of misery, exhausted with weakness, and perceiving beforehand my approaching dissolution; then when a cold sweat shall run down my shrivelled cheeks and perfuse my countenance and my whole body; when the sigh of death shall circulate through all my veins, when I shall feel all my bones broken and dried like a potsherd; when my exhausted heart shall palpitate with pain; when my almost extinguished eyes will close upon themselves, not being able to endure the faintest glimmering of light; when the dying sound of my livid and trembling tongue, will no longer be able to resound in my dull ear the sweet, delightful name of my Jesus; when, in a word, my soul shall be hardly retained within my lips, from which it is on the

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point of escaping—after having offered to the Most High my sufferings and my sacrifice, after having united it to your divine sacrifice, may I remember, O Jesus! that I have one thing more to do; that is, to sigh after you, and after the bliss of seeing and possessing you: that is, to rally if possible my failing strength, to cry out with your prophet, or rather with yourself, “My soul has *thirsted* after thy presence, O strong and living God! When shall I go and appear before the face of my God?” (Ps. xli. 3.)

SIXTH WORD.

All is consummated.—*Joh : xix. 30.*

JESUS has drunk the vinegar that was presented to him. Behold the accomplishment of all the oracles, and, with

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them, the fulfilment of all the ordinances of his Father; all the mysteries, all his sufferings, all his mission, all his work. The crime of man is expiated, the sanctity of God is avenged, his justice satisfied, and his anger appeased. Death is destroyed, hell closed, heaven is open and the children of his redemption are to enter it in succession after him. *All is consummated.* This word proceeded by way of applause from the mouth of God the Redeemer, as it formerly did from that of God the Creator, in having made the world, when he saw that every thing he made was good, and very good: *All is consummated.* O how sweet this word must have been to the mouth and the holy soul of our Saviour! After a whole life of humiliation and labor; after so many tribulations and sufferings, *all is consummated.*

Rejoice, therefore, divine Jesus! Re-

joy with a joy that has cost you so
 dearly, and may the measure of conso-
 lation which delights your soul, equal
 and eternally surpass that of the afflic-
 tions which your heart has felt! For
 my part, who believe that I hear you re-
 citing, with inward delight, that Psalm,
 whose commencement is a cry of sorrow,
 and whose end chants a victory, where
 you say, "I will declare thy name to my
 brethren; in the midst of the church will
 I praise thee. . . . The poor shall eat the
 bread of their redemption and shall be
 filled, and they shall praise the Lord,
 . . . , and my children shall serve him,"
 (Ps. xxi. ;) when I reflect that I myself
 am one of those brethren, one of the
 members of this Church, one of those
 poor, one of those children of whom you
 think, and to whom you announce before-
 hand the *consummation* of redemption,
 an unspeakable joy likewise fills my soul

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and causes my mouth involuntarily to repeat with you, to congratulate you, O sweet Saviour! and to bless your tenderness, *all is consummated.*

But alas! what have I said? I can never pronounce on earth this word so sweet, which your lips have uttered. To my last moments my thoughts must be turned back upon the whole of my past life; instead of having, like you, all the designs and commandments of your Father accomplished, I shall behold nearly them all unworthily opposed and violated. What a sad *consummation!* Ah! at least I shall behold the term of my sins arrived, and their cause and their number arrested for ever, and that will be to me, O Lord! a great consolation and a great joy. At least protect me by the sweet remembrance of you, and full of confidence in your divine merits, in your perfect obedience, and your perfect atonement, I

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shall hope to say at last, this ravishing word, *all is consummated*. This shall be when you shall please to introduce me to your wonderful tabernacle, and make me enter with you into the joy of your heavenly Father. Oh! then may your redemption and your mercy being *consummated* in my behalf, *consummate* also, for ever, my salvation and my bliss. Amen. Amen.

SEVENTH AND LAST WORD.

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

Luke xxiii. 46.

BEHOLD the last word of Jesus. St Luke, who relates it, expressly adds, that in saying this, he expired. It also appears that it was pronounced immediately, or at least a few moments after that which we have just considered, and with which

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it is entirely connected in sense. We may perceive this by the gospel of St. John, where we read, that after he had said, *all is consummated*, Jesus bowed down his head and gave up the ghost.

All is consummated. . . . Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

This word, therefore, being no more than a continuation of the preceding, is likewise to Jesus a word of consolation and joy, and as it were the cry of his triumph at the consummation of his victory. Hence there is something remarkable in its being uttered *with a loud cry*, as we shall hereafter observe.

Father. Let us also greet with a cry of congratulation and love this sweet name that proceeds from the lips of our divine Saviour. The other words which he pronounced are also found in the royal prophet, who had said in the midst of his perils, *Into thy hands, O Lord! I commend*

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my spirit. (Ps. xxx.) But Jesus Christ, in repeating them, changes the title of invocation, what he had not done at the *Fourth Word*, and instead of saying with David, *O Lord*, he says, *Father!* because the *Lord his God* has again become *his Father*, and it is in his paternal tenderness, that he places all his confidence at the hour of death. For this reason *he committed his spirit into his hands.* What more certain or faithful depository than a Father, and particularly when the soul of his Son is confided to his care? His Father, therefore, eagerly received this beloved soul, he carefully preserved it, and faithfully restored it at the appointed time, that is, on the day of his resurrection, by reuniting it to his body, to be never more separated from it.

It is thus the literal sense of this word is explained by the holy fathers and interpreters. St. Athanasius adds this sim-

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ple but so admirable reflection, that it is impossible to read it without experiencing the most delicious emotions. "When Jesus says on the cross, *Father into thy hands I commend my spirit*, we must behold in this *spirit* all men whom he has committed with himself to the bosom of his Father, and whom he commends to him that they may be vivified by and in this *spirit*. For we are his members, and this multitude of members that we are, form but one *body*, which is the Church. It is, therefore, the entire faithful whom he recommends to God with his own soul." Thus the great work of redemption is entirely achieved, and the Son of the Most High commits himself into the hands of his Father, because it was for him he had labored, as if he said to him, "Father, you have desired me to come and purify the world from its crimes. I have come and I have cleans-

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ed it in my blood. Receive me now and see whether the work I have performed be well done, whether the children of my redemption, being now cleansed in my purity, be worthy of you; accept them and preserve them for ever in your love."

O last word of Jesus! sweet word which it is impossible to call to mind without remembering the death and the divine love of our Saviour! Christians! let us imprint it on our memory and precious guard it as the monument of our deliverance, the foundation of our joy and hope during life, and as a pledge of peace and confidence at the hour of death. It was thus the Church and the saints considered it. The Church recites it daily in her office, when at the close of day and of her prayer, she wishes to reveal to our mind the termination of our life and the moment when we shall pray to God for

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the last time. She particularly loves to recite it and to bring it to the recollection of God himself, when she recommends to him the soul of one of her expiring children. A St. Basil, a St. Louis, and many other saints pronounced it when dying, and they were consoled in death. We should, in imitation of their example, pronounce it with our last breath.

You accept, O Lord! this last word, and this last sigh of your servants, because it still appears in your eyes as the last word, and the last sigh of your Son. In hearing his prayer, you have heard ours by anticipation, and accepted the deposit of our souls, by accepting the care of his. By raising him up on the third day, you have also by anticipation raised us. Accept beforehand likewise, the humble, but cordial tribute of our gratitude. We shall be more grateful, and have a better knowledge of your

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tender mercies, O Lord! in your glorious eternity.

We have already observed, as a remarkable circumstance in this LAST WORD of the Man-God, that it was uttered with a loud cry, as the FOURTH. St. Luke assures us of this in express terms: *Jesus, says he, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, &c.* (xxii. 45.) This is the cry to which St. Matthew and St. Mark allude; when the former says, *Jesus, crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost,* (xxvii. 50;) and the latter, *And Jesus having cried out with a loud voice, gave up the ghost.* (xv. 37.) There is every reason to believe that St. Paul alludes to the same, in that passage of his epistle to the Hebrews, where we read that Christ, "offering up prayers and supplications with a strong cry and tears, to him that was able to save him from death, was heard for his reverence to his

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Father." (v. 7.) A valuable testimony by which we learn, that this loud cry was also accompanied by tears.

And what was the cause of this great cry, and these divine tears? In this, as well as in the FOURTH WORD, it proclaims all the intensity of those feelings which predominated in the soul of Jesus; at the hour of his death; but on that occasion, it was the intensity of his confusion and pain, whilst on this it is all the intensity of his love for God and men, of all the heroism of his devotion and sacrifice, all the joy which he feels for having saved us, all the fullness of his confidence in that God who is to raise him again to life, and to raise us up after him. It is, as we have already said, his cry of triumph, at the consummation of his victory. But how could this exhausted victim acquire strength enough to make such a cry heard at his death? This is a

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prodigy, of which the centurion who presided at his punishment will explain us the cause. Before he yielded to that weakness which was caused by his sufferings, Jesus wished to show us, that this weakness, as well as his death, was voluntary. He, therefore, by the power of the divinity which is in him, rallied his strength, in order to prove that we might know it was he who said, "*No one taketh away my life, but it is I myself who lay it down,*" (John x. 18;) he who "*was to be sacrificed because he willed it*" himself, as was foretold by the prophet. (Isa, liii. 7.) He was anxious to show that the great victim about to be immolated, was a God.

This was the consequence drawn from it by the centurion, who, on hearing this miraculous cry, openly said, "*Truly, this man was the Son of God,*" (Mark xv. 39.) It is also the consequence which we should

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draw from it, when we contemplate Jesus put to death for our sakes. What Jesus requires of us, is, not that our hearts should be melted at his sufferings, but that they should profoundly adore the immense and incomprehensible love of a God, who deigned to become man, that he might suffer and die for us. It is because he is a God, that we are healed by his wounds, that his cry reaches to heaven, and to God his Father's heart, and that both one and the other are opened to us. It is because he is a God, that we should for ever acknowledge him as our Redeemer, our king, our master, our model, our hope, our future and immortal bliss.

As for your part, poor dying Christian, if your faltering voice, instead of reviving, is only about to be hushed at your last moment, reanimate, ah! at least reanimate your love, and confide in this divine cry of your Saviour, who has

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opened for you the entire bosom of the Most High, and has excited within it an emotion of eternal tenderness for you, and your hope will not be confounded.

Behold, O Christian! behold your God, fastened upon a cross! Contemplate his wounds, his blood, his death. His head is bowed down to kiss you, his heart is opened to love you, his arms are extended to embrace you; see his body, that priceless victim, exposed to redeem you. Meditate upon all his love! weigh it well in the balance of your heart, in order that it may be ever fixed in his heart, whose whole body was for your sake nailed and fastened to the cross.





VIA CRUCIS;

OR,

THE HOLY WAY OF THE CROSS.

CONTAINING

A NOVENA FOR THE PASSION OF OUR LORD.

A DEVOUT METHOD FOR PERFORMING THE STATIONS OF
THE CROSS,

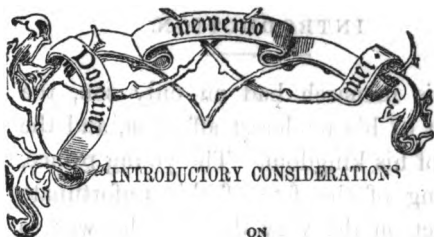
PRAYERS AT MASS,

ETC., ETC.

COMPILED BY

RIGHT REV. DR. WALSH





THE PASSION OF OUR LORD.

CHAPTER I.

A MAN from the lowest dregs of the people was once accused of the crime of treason. Being declared guilty of having conspired against the state, and against the person of his sovereign, he was condemned to the severest punishment of the law, and the king swore not to grant him his pardon. It was necessary that his blood should flow, in order to wipe away the outrage that was offered to the majesty of his crown.

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This monarch had an only son, the object of his tenderest affection, and the heir of his kingdom. The young prince, hearing of the fate of this unfortunate subject on the very day that he was to be led forth to execution, was moved with so ardent a desire to save his life, that he formed the heroic resolution of suffering in his place, in order to deliver him from death. He hastened to his father, and after having obtained from him a promise, under his oath, to grant his request, he informed him of his design, and conjured him to allow him to be put to death instead of his guilty subject. The king was stricken with astonishment at this unexpected demand. His heart was rent asunder with grief, and he shed an abundance of tears. But he had sworn a double oath. He could not suffer the crime to escape with impunity, nor refuse the life of the traitor to

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his son; and he was thus forced to give a consent, which plunged his paternal heart in the most profound sorrow. This innocent victim asked another favor, which, as a dying request, his father, notwithstanding his great reluctance, could not refuse; and this was, to adopt the guilty traitor in his place, and to leave him the inheritance of his kingdom.

The young prince set out for the place of punishment full of joy, and went to announce to the real culprit that he was going to die in his place, and thereby obtain, not only his pardon, but the right of succession to the kingdom. The only return which he asked was, that he should sometimes think of his benefactor, and repay him by a just and grateful affection for such prodigious love.

This unhappy wretch, careless of the fate which awaited him, was engaged at the time in playing with his fellow-

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prisoners. He did not even condescend to listen with any attention to the happy news; nay, at the very name of the king's son, he vomited forth a torrent of reproaches against the young prince. Being delivered from his chains, he ran with the multitude to the public square. He there beheld, with the utmost indifference, the generous prince, who was going to his execution, in order to save him. All on a sudden, being seized with an infernal rage, he joined those who were insulting his deliverer. He exceeded them all in the outrages which he heaped upon him. Nay, like a demon, he begged that he might be permitted to take the place of the public executioner, and he actually had the barbarity to put to death him to whom he owed his life.

O Christian souls! whose bosoms are filled with tenderness and compassion, methinks I hear you exclaim, that this is

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but a romance, or a dream; that the supposition of such a tale is absurd, and that such an instance of unparalleled love and base ingratitude never took place. Nevertheless, this tragic history, told by St. Bernard, in the form of a parable, is strictly true. That extraordinary benefactor, that noble, that generous, that compassionate, and most loving prince, is Jesus Christ! and that traitor, that monster of ingratitude, that base and bloody murderer, is guilty man!

If any thing can recall us from our sinful wanderings, or touch our criminal hearts; if aught can excite us to the love of Jesus, it must be the consideration of all that this adorable Saviour has endured for our salvation. The benefit of creation, and a thousand others, which he daily grants us, must claim, without doubt, our most lively gratitude. But the hill of Calvary is peculiarly the

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mount of Lovers, the Cross is the great furnace of Love; and nothing is more calculated to gain our hearts to Christ, than the sight of that bitter chalice to which he condemned himself, and which he drank to the very last drop. The mighty work of creating us from nothing, cost him but a word; whilst in order to expiate sin, and restore the beauty of his image, which sin had defaced in our souls, he spent thirty-three years on earth in humiliations and sufferings, and died between two thieves on an ignominious gibbet.

Let us, then, frequently meditate on this great mystery of divine love. Let us follow our divine Redeemer, step by step, in his dolorous passion. Let us read our sins in his wounds, and entering through his opened side to his most loving heart, let us contemplate the love with which it burns for our salvation.

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The Church, which has been to our Redeemer a spouse of blood, in gratitude for his love, and from a conviction of its great advantages to her children, has always recommended in the most special manner, the devotion to the Passion. In former times, multitudes of holy pilgrims performed long and painful journeys to the city of Jerusalem, that they might devoutly visit the places that were hallowed by the sufferings of our Lord. The most ample Indulgences were accorded by the Sovereign Pontiffs to those devout pilgrims; but in course of time the pilgrimage to the Holy Land became both difficult and dangerous to the greater part of Christendom, and the Church, desirous to encourage the devotion to the Passion, and to reward the piety of those, for whom, on so many accounts, the journey to Jerusalem was impossible, granted the very same In-

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dulgences to those who should perform the Stations of the Passion, (commonly termed the Way of the Cross, *via Crucis*,) in their own country. . So that, in those Churches, or sacred places, where the Stations are blessed, and erected by the proper authority, we may gain the Indulgences annexed to the visits of the Holy Way of the Cross at Jerusalem, if we visit the Stations, and meditate on the Passion at each.

In order to assist those who practise this useful devotion, various prayers and forms of meditation have been composed, but no particular form is necessary, in order to gain the Indulgences. The condition for obtaining them may be generally reduced to these: to be in the state of grace—to meditate on the passion—to kneel and rise at each Station, (unless it be physically impossible)—to perform all in the same day, (it is not necessary, that
to

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it should be at the same time)—and to recite at the end, Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father, &c., six times.

Those who cannot read, nor meditate well, may recite at each Station one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father, &c., together with six at the end, meditating on the Passion of our Saviour as well as they can, and offering up their prayers for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiffs who have granted these Indulgences. An Act of Contrition for our sins—the cause of our Saviour's sufferings, would be also most suitable at each Station.

For the convenience of those who shall perform the Stations of the Cross, according to the brief form contained in this little volume, I will subjoin some general topics for meditation on the Passion, and form subjects for nine days' reflection, which may serve as a pre-

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paratory Novena to any feast of the Cross, or Passion, during the year. My object shall be to condense as much matter as possible in a small space, leaving further considerations and affections to the pious Christian himself, and to the heavenly light and inspirations of that Divine Spirit, "who searcheth all things, even the deep things of God;" and *"through whom the love of God is poured abroad into our hearts."*

CHAPTER II.

MEDITATION ON THE PASSION OF CHRIST IS USEFUL TO ALL CHRISTIANS.*

By its holy exercise sinners are assisted in returning to God; those who have begun to do penance are enabled to

* From Dupont Compend. Medit. Pars. IV.

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subdue their passions; those who are advanced in God's service, are encouraged in their progress to virtue, and the perfect are united to God.

All the prodigies at the death of Christ are renewed by it in the souls of the faithful. *The earth trembles*, (Matt. xxvii. 51, 52;) that is, earthly hearts are shaken by a salutary fear, when they behold the terrible punishment inflicted on the Son of God by divine justice for the sins of others. *The rocks are split asunder*, being softened by grief for the sins which were the cause of so much suffering to Christ. *The graves are opened* by humble confession, unto the resurrection of a new life. *The veil of the temple is rent from the top even to the bottom*, so that in blissful vision we may behold the glory of the Lord, meditating both on the heights of the divine perfections, and on the depths of the incarnation. *This rock is*

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a refuge to herons, (Ps. ciii. 18,) that is, to sinners. Hither do purer souls flee like doves, and build their nest in the recesses of this rock; and others like harts, who are wont to seek the lofty mountains, and whose conversation is in heaven, here find their place of rest. From hence, they suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the hardest stone. (Deuteron. xxxii. 13.) For, in his passion, Christ was like the hardest rock, in bearing torments and injuries; and when that rock was struck, there flowed out oil to heal our wounds, and the honey of divine consolations.

From hence we may conclude what end a Christian should propose to himself in meditating on the Passion, viz.: either to purify his soul from sin, or to advance it in virtue, or to unite it by the most ardent love to God.

Moreover, we may consider the Passion as a subject, either of joy or sorrow.

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It is a subject of *joy*, because in that mystery, the abyss of divine mercy is disclosed, the gate of heaven is opened, the extent and depth of divine love are exhibited, and the great value of men is most clearly manifested. Hence, Abraham seeing this *day* of the Lord's Passion, in the ram which was substituted for his son Isaac, *saw it and rejoiced*, (Genes. xxii. 13; John viii. 56;) and Christ himself in the Canticles, terms this the day of his coronation, of his espousals, and of the joy of his heart. This mode of considering the Passion is suited to the perfect.

The next mode is by way of *grief* and *compassion*, because Christ has suffered so much, and his sufferings have been caused by me. And as he himself felt so much horror and sadness, it is just, that I should sympathize with him, lest that complaint which he made should be

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applicable to me: *And I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort me, and I found none.* (Psalm lxviii. 21.)

Christ likewise drank the chalice of his Passion, not only by enduring torment in his body, but also by thinking of his torments beforehand in his mind. Of the former, he said to the sons of Zebedee: *Can you drink the chalice which I am about to drink?* (Matt. xx. 22.) Of the latter, there is this addition, (in St. Mark x. 38,) *Can you drink the chalice which I DRINK; or be baptized with the baptism with which I AM BAPTIZED?* as if he was even then daily drinking it, from the apprehension of his impending torments. But, in the garden of Gethsemani, he entirely drained it. Wherefore, we should endeavor to drink our chalice in this twofold manner, both by con-

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formity of suffering, and an affection of compassion.

In this affection, we will follow the example of the Mother of Christ, whose *soul was pierced through by the sword.* (Luke ii. 35.) This is also the peculiar gift of God, concerning which we read in Zachariás, (xii. 10,) *And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn, as one mourneth for an only son.*

But this affection will not suffice, unless there be a similitude in suffering—either by voluntary punishment of the body, or by cheerfully enduring those afflictions which come to us from others. For amongst the gifts of God, St. Paul reckons: *not only that you should believe in him, but also, that you should suffer for him.* (Phil. i. 29.) And of himself, he writes elsewhere, (2 Cor. iv. 10,) *always bearing about in our body the mortification*

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of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies. He also glories in this: I bear the marks of the Lord in my body. (Gal. vi. 17.)

From the exercise of these, we will also obtain the desire of imitating those heroic virtues, the living model of which our Lord displayed in his Passion. This is the principal end, and is recommended by St. Peter, when he says, (iv. 1,) *Christ, therefore, having suffered in the flesh, be ye also armed with the same thought.*

But, in order to obtain the proposed end in meditating on the Passion of our Lord, we require preparation, not only on account of the general reason by which we are obliged to prepare ourselves before prayer, that we may not be *like a man who tempteth God*, (Eccl. xviii. 23,) but also on this special account, that our Lord himself prepared with great earnestness for the sufferings of his Pas-

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sion. Wherefore, I will imagine that Christ himself says to me, "Remember my poverty—the wormwood and the gall." (Lament. iii. 19.) And I will answer him in the words that follow the above, (20, 21,) "I will be mindful and remember, and my soul shall languish within me. These things I shall think over in my heart, therefore will I hope," because the devout commemoration of the Passion of Christ excites great confidence.

Our preparation then should be such as St. Bonaventure prescribes. A man should begin so noble a work, humbly, confidently, earnestly, and with all possible purity of heart. (*In stim.* p. i. c. 2.)

1. *Humbly.* Not only because in the beginning of prayer, the just man is first accuser of himself, (Prov. xxi. 17,) but also, by the special consideration, that I have plunged my Saviour into so much misery, and this will be to me a subject

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of great confusion. Nay more, I will consider myself unworthy of assisting at the sufferings of Christ. For it was by great privilege that he communicated the anguish of his mind to his three disciples in the garden, and that he wished St. John and Magdalen to be present with his Mother at his death. But the proud are hindered from beholding this spectacle, as it is written in Job, (xxxvii. 24,) "Therefore, men shall fear him, and all that seem to themselves to be wise, shall not dare to behold him."

2. *Confidently.* Because if I devote myself to the consideration of his Passion, I will share in those fruits and merits, for which the Lord suffered. Three motives will excite this confidence in me. The great merit of the Passion itself—the great love of Christ, which induced him out of compassion for us, to become our advocate—the example

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of the good thief, who found pardon and grace on the cross itself.

3. *Earnestly*; as Christ himself prayed before his Passion, not heavily, or tepidly, like the sleeping disciples.

4. *With a clean heart*—such as we ought to present ourselves with, to receive so precious a liquor as the blood of Christ, flowing into our souls, from the effect of this heavenly meditation.



NOVENA

IN HONOR OF

THE PASSION OF CHRIST

ON THE VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR LORD'S
PASSION.

FIRST DAY.

Who is it that suffers?

The Lamb without spot; who did no sin neither was guile found in his mouth. (1 Pet. ii. 22.) The Holy of Holies, to whom the spirit was given without measure; whom his very crucifiers acknowledged to be a just man, and the Son of God, when they said with compunction; (Matt. xxvii. 54,) Indeed, this man was the Son of God; and, (Luke xxiii. 47,) Indeed, this was a just man.

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He suffers, who had entirely spent himself in doing good to others; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil. (Acts x. 38.) So far, therefore, from deserving such punishment, he merited all obedience and love. Whence he complains, (Ps. xxxiv. 12,) They repaid me evil for good.

He that suffers is the great Lover of Mankind, who became all things for us
✕ —our Father—our Master—our Physician—our Redeemer—our Shepherd—our Creator—our Benefactor—the Spouse of our Souls.

A son should feel for the murder of his father, and a spouse for the suffering of her bridegroom. How much more should I feel for the sufferings and death of Christ, who even before his Passion insinuated himself into our inmost heart, by a wonderful sacrament; in order that

✕ The Father did not

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we in return might feel his sufferings, as if they were our own!

(NOTE.—At the close of this Meditation the Litany of the Passion, or any other form of prayer to our suffering Lord, may be recited, according to each person's devotion and leisure.)

SECOND DAY.

WHAT does he suffer?

His sufferings may be comprised under two heads—his external suffering, which our Lord himself called a *Baptism*, and his internal, which he denominated a *Chalice*.

With regard to the former, he suffered all kind of torment. In external things; because he was stripped of his very garments, which were divided amongst them by his executioners, and he was crucified naked, and in public. In his honor; every kind of contumely was offered him. In his reputation; he was traduced in

divers ways. In his virtue; he was looked upon as a Samaritan, as one possessed by a devil, as a seducer, a glutton, and a wine-drinker, (John vii. 20; viii. 48; Matt. xi. 19; xxvii. 63,) a blasphemer and a reprobate. In his wisdom; he was considered illiterate, as one become mad, and a fool. (Mark iii. 21.) In his miracles; he was treated as an impostor, a magician, and one who worked through Beelzebub. (Luke xi. 15.) In his body; he endured torments, which in themselves were the greatest of all, and which were heightened by the delicacy of his frame. In his friends; because he was either deserted by them in the hour of distress, or because he suffered on account of what they endured, and especially his blessed Mother.

Let us consider how he suffered in each of his senses.

His eyes were tormented in beholding

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the actions and gestures of those who mocked and derided him; also, in seeing the tears of those who loved him. His eyes were also disfigured with spittle, blinded with the blood which streamed down from his head, and worn out of their sockets by his own tears.

His ears were horrified by listening to the blasphemies, the false testimony, and the unworthy accusations which were made against him.

His smell was offended by the fetid odor of Calvary, the place of skulls and death.

His taste suffered from the burning thirst, and from the vinegar and gall that were offered him to drink.

His touch suffered, for he was tormented in all his members—also, by the scourges, the thorns, and the nails.

We may also reckon over the principal parts of his body, and consider the pecu-

liar torment which he endured in each, so that, it is true of Christ, "From the sole of his foot, even to his head, there is no soundness in him." (Isaias i. 6.)

His interior sufferings were of the greatest degree, as we may infer from his dreadful agony, his sweat of blood, and his sorrow even unto death.

THIRD DAY.

FROM whom does he suffer?

From men of every degree; high and low, rich and poor, lay and clerical, Jews and idolaters; from those on whom he had conferred many benefits during the course of his public ministry.

All these were excited against him by various motives. Some could not bear to be reproved by him for their vices; others dreaded the power of Cæsar;

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others were hurried along by a blind religious zeal.

The persecutors of Christ were urged on by the powers of darkness, by the very devils themselves. For, The devil put it into the heart of Judas to betray him. (John xiii. 2.) And Christ himself when apprehended said: This is your hour, and the power of darkness. (Luke xxii. 53.) Neither was our Lord delivered up to the power of Satan on the same terms as Job; for the devil was commanded *to spare his life*, (Job ii. 6,) but for Christ no exception is made.

The sufferings of Christ were also increased from his knowledge of the hearts of his tormentors. He knew the demoniac rage with which they thirsted for his blood to be such, that the greatness and malignity of their hatred exceeded even the punishments which they inflicted.

** false Theology*
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FOURTH DAY.

FOR whom does he suffer?

X For all mankind, without exception; to restore to God the honor of which he was robbed; to appease his wrath justly excited against men; to procure grace, and the necessary means of eternal salvation for them; to open to them the gates of heaven, and purchase for them the glory of endless beatitude.

An infinite ransom was required for this great work; because the sins of men were innumerable, their malice was infinite, as the Majesty of God, whom they offended, was infinite.

And although on account of the infinite dignity of the sufferer, one drop of blood would have sufficed, yet he was pleased to pour it out to the last drop, that his redemption might be plentiful and superabundant, and that, as St. Bernard says,

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(*Serm. 3, de Nativ.*,) from the greatness of the remedy, I might be able to estimate the magnitude of my danger.

Moreover, as the whole of man was wounded, so he wished to suffer in every thing, that he might apply a suitable remedy to each of our vices; his nakedness to our cupidity, his ignorance to our pride, &c.

He suffers for his enemies, even for his very murderers, that he might obtain for them, from God, the pardon of their deicide; and thus he prayed for them to his Father on the cross; nay, he excused them, and said, that *they knew not what they did*.

He suffered for all mankind in such a manner as to offer up his torments to his Father, for each. He, therefore, applied them to me in particular, and I can say with St. Paul, He loved me, and delivered himself for me. (Galat. ii. 20.)

FIFTH DAY.

WITH what sentiments did he suffer?

With those of the most ardent love, of which St. Paul writes, That you may be able to comprehend what is the breadth and length, and height and depth; to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge. (Ephes. iii. 18, 19.)

The proofs of this affection are, that he ardently desired to suffer for us. I have, said he, a baptism, wherein I must be baptized, and O how I am straitened until it be accomplished! (Luke xii. 50;) that he embraced his sufferings when they drew nigh, whereas, there are many who profess a desire of suffering, but flee from it when it approaches—that he was prepared to suffer even much more than his most cruel and wicked enemies could

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invent or inflict. He was offered, because he himself willed it. (Isai.)

SIXTH DAY.

WHAT virtues did he exhibit in his Passion?

He particularly wished to display all virtues. He came on earth as the master, teacher, and model of virtues, and thus, at the end of his life, he was desirous of giving, as if in a compendium, a specimen of all. He merited those virtues for us by his Passion; it was therefore meet, that by the very acts of those virtues he should merit them for us.

Many of his virtues were before obscured; they are now brought forward and openly displayed, as if he were leaving them to us as his last will, according

to what he said of charity. This is my commandment.

He exercised those heroic acts, the practices of which he terms blessed—poverty of spirit, even to his garments, for he hangs naked; and humility, which is nearly allied to poverty, being made the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. (Ps. xxi. 7.) Meekness; who, when he was reviled, did not revile, when he suffered he threatened not, but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly. (1 Pet. ii. 20.) And, he was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before his shearers, he opened not his mouth. (Isai. liii. 7.) He, mourned, when with a strong cry and tears, he offered up prayers and supplication on the cross. (Heb. v, 7.) Nay, his whole body perspired blood, through the greatness of his grief.

He thirsted after justice, as he was de-

sious of all the conditions of justice, and of purchasing, even with his life, true justice for us, saying, I thirst. He was so merciful, that he delivered himself up entirely to relieve our miseries, which excited the compassion of his tender heart. He was clean of heart, and therefore his sacrifice was most pleasing to his Father. For it was fitting we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners. (Heb. vii. 26.) He was a peace-maker, because by his death he reconciled us to God. But now in Christ Jesus, you who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the Blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one. (Ephes. ii. 13, 14.) In fine, he suffered for justice sake; and all those things which he foretold his disciples would suffer, he himself endured in the highest degree. When men shall revile you and persecute

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you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake, &c. (Matt. v. 11.)

His obedience is to be specially considered from the words of the Apostle, He humbled himself, being made obedient unto death. (Phil. ii. 8.)

This obedience was in a most difficult matter. It was most entire: Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst, (John xiv. 38,) that the punishment of his drinking vinegar should be executed.

His obedience was most prompt. I do not resist. I have not gone back. I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheek to them that plucked them. I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spit upon me, (Isaias i. 56,) from whence we may perceive, likewise, that his obedience was

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most humble. It was an obedience constant unto death, and an obedience of love. That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, so I do. (John xiv. 31.)

SEVENTH DAY.

WHAT journeys or stations did Christ make in his Passion? When, where, and in what circumstances did he suffer?

His journeys or stations were seven.

1. From the chamber of the last supper he went into the garden, where he was sorrowful, prayed, and sweated drops of blood.

2. From Gethsemani, where he was apprehended, he went to Annas.

3. From Annas to Caiphas.

4. From Caiphas to Pilate's hall.

- 5. From thence to the palace of Herod.
- 6. From Herod back to Pilate.
- 7. From thence, after his condemnation, to Mount Calvary.

With regard to each of these, we may form various considerations, such as, on the Person and Dignity of the Sufferer, his interior feelings, his steps, his words, &c., his attendants, the people by whom he was surrounded, the places to which he was led.

He suffered in the flower of his age, in the bloom of youth, at the festival of the Pasch, when there was a great concourse of the Jewish people in the royal city and metropolis of the kingdom.

He suffered on Calvary, a public, exposed, and infamous place—a place of skulls and death.

He did so ; that as he died for all, he might be seen by all, that he might be subject to more ignominy and horror,

THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

and to signify, that by his death, he would vivify the bones of the dead.

He chose midnight, and an ignoble, wretched dwelling for his birthplace, to conceal his glory; but he suffered at mid-day, for the greater confusion, that his death might be more notorious, that his misery might be more fully seen, and to show the supreme ardor of his love, by which he offered himself a holocaust for our sins.

He suffered between two thieves, and in the sight of a great multitude, most of whom were the slaves and agents of the devil.

EIGHTH DAY

WHAT were the sorrows of the blessed Virgin, on account of the sufferings of her Son?

They were proportioned to her love, which was of the highest degree, because

1. He was her Son, according to nature, and entirely hers, for she conceived him without a father; and she, therefore, had the combined love of a father and mother for him. Moreover, she conceived him by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, who is Love itself, and this Divine Spirit stimulated her love.

2. Because he was her First-born, and her Only-begotten Son, circumstances which aggravated her grief, as we read in Zacharias. And they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only son; and they shall grieve over him, as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first-born. (xii. 10.)

3. On account of their wonderful resemblance to each other; thus mothers are wont to love those of their children who are most like themselves. But

THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

Christ, in his entire body and manner, greatly resembled his mother; and she, likewise, resembled him in his excellent habits and virtues.

4. On account of the wonderful sanctity and wisdom of Christ. For charity, properly regulated, has the greatest love for those that are most holy, because they are most like to God. If to this love, that of nature, which is the greatest possible in a mother for her son, be added, the love is wonderfully increased, and consequently the grief is more vehement. And if the daughters of Jerusalem bemoaned him so much, because they knew his innocence, what must his Mother have felt, who knew him so well, and so intimately?

5. On account of the inestimable benefits she had received from Christ, for he that is mighty had done great things for her: and particularly, he made her

his Mother, and rendered her worthy of being his Mother. Now, love is grateful, and is always anxious to make a return. How, then, must she not have been affected at the sufferings of her benefactor, and of such a benefactor!

6. Because her Son was also the Son of God. To maternal love, then, she added that of the creature for the Creator. When she was, therefore, interiorly filled with a sense of his divine excellence, and most ardently loved her God in her Son, his unmerited and cruel sufferings must have really pierced through her tender heart.

7. Because the spirit of the Blessed Virgin was united with God, and therefore, with her Son. Hence, she must have considered and felt his sufferings, as if they were her own. She knew, also, that her grief afflicted the heart of her Son, and this pierced her with new

THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

sorrow. Moreover, her grief was much increased, because she well understood all those circumstances of our Lord's Passion, which were heretofore mentioned, and from which we are to form a proper estimate of the bitterness and magnitude of his sufferings. Oh! how truly did the sword of grief pierce through her soul! (Luke ii. 35.)

NINTH DAY.

WHAT were the virtues exhibited by his Mother during the Passion of her Son?

Resignation of her own will: conformably to that saying of Christ, Not my will, but thine be done.

Humility. Amidst so much suffering, ignominy, contempt, and grievous accusations of Jesus, who is condemned as a

malefactor, she is not ashamed to acknowledge herself openly as his Mother, and to share in all his ignominy.

Fortitude and greatness of soul; though she is filled with the most deadly anguish at the sight of her agonizing Son, she does not sink under her grief, but stands before the cross, and contemplates those immense sufferings, which with such cruel pangs afflict her heart.

Charity for mankind; she is not indignant at the murderers of her Son, but rather has compassion on their blindness. And because he endured his sufferings for the salvation of all, his pious Mother, after the example of her Son, offered them up to God the Father, even for those who crucified him.



THE HOLY WAY OF THE CROSS.

PROCEEDING to each Station let a Stanza or three verses of the Stabat Mater, or Plaint of the Blessed Virgin Mary be said or sung in Latin or English ; going from the Altar to the first Station, let two stanzas be recited,

Stabat Mater dolorosa
Juxta Crucem lacrymosa,
Dum pendebat Filius.

Cujus animam gementem,
Contristatam et dolentem,
Pertransiit gladius.

Beneath the world's redeeming rood,*
The most afflicted Mother stood,
Immersed in grief for her Son's blood.

As that stream'd down from ev'ry part,
Of all his wounds he felt the smart;
What pierced his body, pierced her heart.

* *Rood* signifies *Cross*.

THE HOLY WAY

FIRST STATION.

V. WE adore thee, O Christ! and bless thee.

R. Because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.

Jesus is condemned to death.

Let us consider the wonderful submission of Jesus, when he received this unjust sentence. Let us reflect, that it was not Pilate alone who condemned him, but that all here present, and all the sinners of the world cried aloud for his death. Let us, therefore, penetrated with the most lively sorrow, say to him:—

O adorable Jesus! since it is our crimes that have sentenced you to death, grant that we may detest them from our whole heart, and that our sincere repentance may obtain for us mercy and pardon.

OF THE CROSS.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord!

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

Pilate is seated on his tribunal, and the Son of God at his feet in the state of a criminal! A mortal, a sinner, on the throne! Innocence itself, the Holy of Holies, a God, at his feet! What a change! what injustice! O sin, behold thy work.

*O quam tristis et afflicta,
Fuit illa benedicta,
Mater Unigeniti.*

*How sad and how afflicted is
The blessed Mary, when she sees
Her son, her God, in sacrifice.*

THE HOLY WAY

SECOND STATION.

V. WE adore thee, O Christ, &c.

R. Because, &c., as before.

Jesus takes the Cross on his shoulders.

Let us consider with what meekness our divine Master takes on his mangled and bloody shoulders, the terrible instrument of his punishment. He thus wished to teach us how to carry our cross, by accepting with the greatest resignation, the sufferings that shall be inflicted on us by our heavenly Father, and those which we may endure from our fellow-creatures.

O meek Jesus! It is we, miserable sinners, who are guilty of all kinds of iniquity, that should have carried this cross, and not you; for you were innocent. Grant us then strength to imitate your example, by enduring, without

a murmur, all the trials of this life, which, in the order of your fatherly Providence, may enable us to satisfy your justice, and to arrive at our heavenly country.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord!

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls of the faithful, &c.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

His cross is made heavy by all the iniquities of the world, is weighed down by all my sins! Nevertheless, Jesus, scourged and exhausted as he is, receives it with a holy joy for my salvation; and I wish to suffer nothing for my sins!

Quæ mærebat, et dolebat,
Pia mater, dum videbat
Nati pœnas inclyti.

The pious Mother grieves and sighs,
Great floods of tears stream from her eyes,
Whilst on the cross her Jesus dies.

THE HOLY WAY

THIRD STATION.

V. WE adore thee, &c.

R. Because &c.

Jesus falls the first time under the Cross.

Let us consider Jesus Christ beginning his painful journey to Calvary. The blood which he has lost when he was scourged and crowned with thorns, has weakened him to such a degree, that he falls under the heavy load. He rises again, after the most cruel outrages, which he endures without betraying the least emotion of resentment. Behold how he thus wished to atone for our many falls, and to teach us to rise again, by the austerities of penance, when we have had the misfortune to fall into the abyss of sin.

O Good Jesus! stretch forth your suc-

OF THE CROSS.

coring hand, and assist us amidst all the dangers to which we are exposed. Vouchsafe to strengthen us in our weaknesses, that after having courageously followed you to Calvary, we may there taste the delicious fruits of the tree of life, and become eternally happy with you.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory, &c.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord.

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

What a triumph for the enemies of Jesus! What blasphemies do they commit when they see him fall! And, oh! how often have I disgraced my religion, dishonored piety, and given joy to the wicked, by my falls and my scandals! O my Jesus! guide and confirm my steps in the way of your commandments:

THE HOLY WAY

Quis est homo qui non ferat,
Christi Matrem si videret
In tanto supplicio.

Who can with tearless eyes look on
The bleeding wounds of such a Son,
For whom the Mother doth bemoan.

FOURTH STATION.

V. WE adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Jesus meets his most afflicted Mother.

Let us consider how painful it was to this divine Son to meet his beloved Mother under such afflicting circumstances; and how heart-rending it was to Mary to behold her adorable Son, dragged along by a troop of ruffians, through an immense crowd, who load him with reproaches. At this sight, her maternal heart is pierced with a thousand swords, and is torn with all anguish. She wished

OF THE CROSS.

to deliver our Saviour, and to rescue him from the hands of his executioners; but she knows that the work of our salvation is to be thus accomplished. Uniting then the sacrifice of her love to that of her Son, she participates in all his sufferings, and accompanies him, even to his last breath.

O Mary! Mother of Sorrows! obtain for us that ardent love with which you accompanied Jesus to that holy mountain, and that constancy which you displayed at the foot of the cross, in order that we may faithfully remain there with you, and that nothing may be ever able to separate us from thence.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory, &c.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord!

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

Oh, what a martyrdom, when their

THE HOLY WAY

eyes met each other! The Son and the Mother have offered this most painful sacrifice for me; and shall I not love the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary!

*Quis non posset contristari
Christi Matrem contemperi,
Dolentem cum Filio.*

O worse than Jewish heart, that could
Unmoved, behold the double flood,
Of Mary's tears, and Jesus blood.

FIFTH STATION.

V. WE adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Jesus is assisted in carrying his Cross by Simon of Cyrene.

Let us consider the great goodness of Jesus Christ towards us. Though he allows himself to be assisted in carrying his cross, it is not because he wants strength, it being his powerful hands that sustain the world; but he was anxious

OF THE CROSS.

to teach us to unite our sufferings to his, and to drink with him of his chalice of bitterness.

O Jesus, our Master! You have drunk the most bitter portion of this chalice, and you have left the smallest to our share. Do not suffer us to be such enemies to ourselves, as to refuse it. Enable us, on the contrary, to accept it cheerfully, that we may become worthy of drinking in the torrent of delights with which you inebriate your elect in the land of the living.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory, &c.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord!

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

I would be transported with joy, if our Holy Father, the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, should send me a relic of the true

THE HOLY WAY

cross. But whenever any affliction befalls me, it is Jesus himself who gives me a portion of his cross! How many times have I refused it! How often have I not carried it with murmurs and complaints! Ah, Jesus! the whole cross should be mine, because I have sinned! Grant, at least, that I may accompany you, by bearing, for the love of you, the cross of adversity.

*Pro peccatis suæ gentis,
Vidit Jesum in tormentis,
Et flagellis subditum.*

*She sees her Jesus for our crimes,
She sees him scourged a thousand times;
A thorny crown his head confines.*

SIXTH STATION.

V. WE adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

OF THE CROSS.

Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.

Let us consider the heroic action of this holy woman, who presses through the crowd of soldiers to behold her divine Master. She sees that he is covered all over with spittle, dust, perspiration, and blood. The painful sight afflicts her soul, even to tears; and her love placing her above all fear, she approaches Jesus, and wipes his disfigured countenance; that august countenance, which ravishes all the Saints, and before the splendor of which the Angels veil their faces with their wings.

O Jesus! the most beautiful among the sons of men! to what a condition has your love for us reduced you! Oh, never were you more worthy of our adorations and homage than now! We adore you, therefore; and prostrate before your divine Majesty, we beseech you to remember no more our many

THE HOLY WAY

offences, and to restore to our soul its ancient beauty, which it has lost by sin.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory, &c.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord!

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

What courage does not this holy woman display! How nobly she tramples under foot all human respect! But what a great reward for her faith! The divine traces of our Saviour's face are imprinted on the veil with which she wiped him. O my soul! contemplate this holy face. Behold therein the mirror of Christians.

Vidit suum dulcem Natum.

Moriendo desolatum.

Dum emisit spiritum.

The loving Son before her eyes,

Ascends the cross of sacrifice:

For us he bleeds, for us he dies.

OF THE CROSS.

SEVENTH STATION.

V. WE adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Jesus falls under the Cross the second time.

Let us consider the Man-God falling again under his grievous load. Let us behold this victim stretched along the ground, under the terrible wood of his sacrifice, exposed anew to the cruelty of his executioners, and the soldiers. It was in order to give us a further proof of his infinite love, that Jesus Christ permitted this second fall. He also wished to teach us, that as we so often relapse into sin, we should never lose our confidence in his mercy—that in the midst of the greatest afflictions we should not be discouraged—that the road to heaven is filled with briers and thorns, and that in order to share in his glory,

THE HOLY WAY

we must first pass through the crucible of suffering.

O Jesus, our strength! Preserve us from every relapse—save us from the misfortune of losing our immortal souls, and of thus rendering useless all the sufferings and fatigues which you endured, to deliver us from eternal death.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory, &c.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord!

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

A second fall! new outrages, mockeries, and insult! Alas! I perceive the reason—Jesus will be satiated with ignominy, and so many humiliations are not sufficient to cure my pride.

*Eja Mater! fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris,
Fac ut tecum lugeam.*

OF THE CROSS.

Ah, pious Mother! teach my heart
Of sighs and tears the holy art;
And in thy grief to bear a part.

EIGHTH STATION.

V. WE adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem, who followed him,
and wept over him.

Let us here admire the noble generosity of our Divine Lord. He seems to forget his own sufferings altogether, to administer consolation to those holy women, who were plunged in the deepest grief at his deplorable state. He exhorts them not to weep for him, but rather for themselves, and their ungrateful, perfidious country. He has thus taught us, that our compassion for his sufferings will make little impression on

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his tender heart, unless we bewail our sins, which are the sole cause of all his agony.

O amiable Jesus, true comforter of afflicted souls! vouchsafe to look down upon us with tenderness and mercy. Grant us grace to walk constantly after you, on the royal road of the cross, that like the women of Jerusalem we may hear the words of life, and enjoy your unspeakable consolations.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory, &c.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord!

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

You tell me, O my Jesus! not to weep for you. Can there be any evil more worthy of tears than your sufferings? Ah, I comprehend your meaning. Sin, which I commit so recklessly, is the greatest

OF THE CROSS.

of all evils. And yet, I accuse myself of it so coldly, and relapse into it so promptly! O my God! enlighten me, and teach my heart.

Fac, ut ardeat cor meum.
In amando Christum Deum.
Ut sibi complaceam.

Of all great gifts I ask this one,
To love my Jesus, thy dear Son,
Whose bleeding wounds my heart have won.

NINTH STATION.

V. WE adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Jesus falls under the Cross the third time.

Let us consider our adorable Jesus arrived at the summit of Calvary. He directs his eyes to the spot where he is soon to be sacrificed to the fury of his

THE HOLY WAY

enemies. His attention is engaged at this moment by our endless relapses, and the great number of sinners for whom his blood will be shed in vain. This cruel thought afflicts his tender heart more than all the punishment which he has yet to endure. It fills his soul with a profound sorrow, and his strength failing him, as at his agony, he falls on his face to the earth.

O Jesus, Victim of Love! Behold you are at length going to be immolated, for the salvation of mankind. Deign to apply to our souls the merits of your sacrifice in this life, that we may offer you the sacrifice of our praises during all eternity.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory, &c.

V. Have Mercy on us, O Lord

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

OF THE CROSS.

MEDITATION.

Why so many falls, O my Jesus! since you are the strength of God? My child—Have you fallen but three times only? I fall to teach you how to rise, and to assist you in rising from so many relapses, with sorrow for your sins, and with confidence in my grace and mercy.

*Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Crucifixa fige plagas,
Cordi meo valide.*

O holy Mother, Virgin blest,
Imprint these wounds on my cold breast;
In them I'll sleep and take my rest.

TENTH STATION.

V. WE adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Jesus is stripped of his garments.

Let us consider how much our dear Redeemer suffered, when his executioners

stripped him of his garments. All the wounds which he had received, and by which his clothes adhered to his sacred flesh, were now torn open, and thus the pain of his bloody scourging was renewed. But what he most sensibly felt was, to see himself exposed, in a state of nakedness, before such an immense multitude.

O Jesus, divine Lamb! you have at length come to the place of slaughter, without opening your mouth to complain. Ah! how forcible and how eloquent is your silence! With what efficacy it teaches us the necessity of repressing our impatience and our murmurs! You suffer yourself to be stripped of all your garments, to expiate our misfortune, in having lost the precious gift of grace. Oh! grant that we may recover that inestimable treasure, that we may entirely put off the old man, and be clothed with

OF THE CROSS.

the new, according to you, so that we may henceforth live according to the sentiments of your adorable Heart.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory, &c

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord!

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

What are your thoughts, O my Jesus! whilst they are tearing off your garments, together with pieces of your flesh?

My child, I am offering all to my Father, for you, because I think you will one day find great difficulty in separating yourself from such an object, from such an occasion of sin, from such a criminal habit which tyrannizes over you. My suffering is your strength.

*Tui Nati vulnerati
Tam dignati pro me pati,
Pœnas mecum divide.*

THE HOLY WAY

Oh, may the wounds of thy dear Son,
Our contrite heart possess alone,
And all terrene affections drown.

ELEVENTH STATION.

V. WE adore thee, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Jesus is nailed to the Cross.

Let us consider Jesus Christ offering himself to his executioners to be crucified, and stretching himself out on the wood of the cross. Oh! what torment does he not endure whilst the heavy strokes of the hammer are driving the nails into his feet and his adorable hands! His flesh is torn, his bones are bruised, his nerves are broken, his veins are burst asunder! His blood flowing in great torrents, exhausts his strength,

OF THE CROSS.

and adds to his other terrible sufferings, that of the most burning thirst.

O sin! accursed sin! It was you plunged into that ocean of sorrow the victim of our salvation. Ah! Christian, what an excess of love! what immense charity! Shall not our hearts be rent asunder with grief, and burn with love at this dreadful sight! will they not renounce all the pleasures of the world! Shall they not be ever crucified with that of Jesus, and will not our eyes pour forth torrents of tears both day and night.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory, &c.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord!

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

O my soul, do you understand these strokes of the hammer? Lay your hand then on the arms of the cross, in place of

THE HOLY WAY

that of Jesus. . . . The very idea of this makes me shudder; and yet, it is I who am guilty. O cursed sin! I will die rather than commit you any more.

Fac me tecum pie flere,
Crucifixo condeslere,
Donec ego vixerq.

O Virgin! now this favor give,
That I with Jesus Christ may grieve,
For all the days that I will live.

TWELFTH STATION.

V. WE adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Jesus expires on the Cross.

Let us consider Jesus, the God of all sanctity, expiring between two malefactors, and let us admire the sweetness and strength of his love. He prays to his Father for the pardon of his murderers. He promises heaven to the good thief.

He recommends his Mother to his beloved disciple. He commits his soul to the hands of his Father. He announces that all is consummated, and he expires for us. At the same moment all creatures proclaim his Divinity. All nature mourns, and seems anxious to annihilate itself, on beholding the death of its Creator.

O sinners! will you be the only exception to this general mourning? Will you alone remain insensible before this heart-rending spectacle? Cast one look upon your Saviour, and see the frightful state to which your sins have reduced him. Nevertheless, he forgives you, if your repentance be sincere. His feet are nailed to await your coming. His arms are stretched out to receive you. His side is opened, and his heart wounded to pour out all his graces upon you. His head is bowing down to give you the

THE HOLY WAY

kiss of reconciliation and peace. Oh! let us all then run up to his cross, and let us die for him, as he has died for us!

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory, &c.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord!

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

His feet are fastened, that he may await me; his arms extended, to embrace me; his head inclined, to give me the kiss of peace; his side opened to give me access to his Heart, and that adorable Heart wounded to move my ungrateful heart! O Jesus! when shall I love you, as you have loved me!

*Juxta crucem tecum stare,
Et me tibi sociare,
In planctu desidero.*

*Beneath the cross with thee I'll stand,
And will unite in one strong band,
Whilst grief and love my soul expand.*

OF THE CROSS.

THIRTEENTH STATION.

V WE adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Jesus is taken down from the Cross.

Let us consider the overwhelming grief of this tender Mother, after the death of her Divine Son Jesus. She receives this precious deposit in her arms. She gazes on his pale, bloody, and disfigured countenance. She sees his eyes closed, his mouth shut, his eyes opened, and his hands and feet pierced through. This sight is to her an unspeakable martyrdom, the value of which God alone can comprehend.

O Mary! we, we alone are the cause of your affliction; and it is our sins that have pierced through your soul, by fastening Jesus to the cross. O Mother of

THE HOLY WAY

Mercy! vouchsafe to obtain our pardon, and permit us to adore in your arms our crucified Love. Imprint so strongly in our souls, the sorrows which you felt at the foot of the cross, that we may never lose the recollection of them.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord!

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

O Mary, Mother of Sorrows! permit me to approach you.

Come, my child, and contemplate this harrowing scene. See his countenance pale and disfigured, his eyes and mouth closed, his hands and feet pierced through, and his side open. Reckon, if you can, all the wounds of his body. Behold the

OF THE CROSS.

**Justice of God! Behold the enormity of
Sin! Behold the love of Jesus!**

*Virgo virginum præclara,
Mihi jam non sis amara,
Fas me tecum plangere.*

*Virgin of virgins Purest! deign,
That I may not increase thy pain,
Take me a mourner in thy train.*

FOURTEENTH STATION.

V. WE adore, &c.

R. Because, &c.

Jesus is laid in the Sepulchre.

Behold then, O Jesus, our dear Redeemer! behold the spot where your adorable Body, the precious pledge of our salvation, is reposed. Grant, that our greatest comfort in this valley of tears may be to meditate on the sufferings and ignominious death which you

THE HOLY WAY

endured for our deliverance. You wished to be placed in a new sepulchre, to give us to understand, that we must approach you in the sacrament of your love, with a new heart. Vouchsafe to purify us from all our stains, and to render us worthy to assist frequently at your holy banquet. Bury in the same tomb all our iniquities, that we may die to our passions and to every thing earthly, to lead with you a life hidden in God, and thus deserve a happy end, and the blissful vision of you in the splendor of your glory.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory be to the Father.

V. Have mercy on us, O Lord!

R. Have mercy on us.

V. May the souls, &c.

R. Amen.

MEDITATION.

My soul becomes the Tomb of Jesus

OF THE CROSS.

in the Holy Communion. O my God!
make it an entirely *new* sepulchre, by
cleansing it from all its stains—a sepul-
chre *hewn out of the rock* by my firm
constancy in your service—a *glorious*
sepulchre, by never permitting me to
crucify you by sin.

Fac ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis fac consortem,
Et plagas recolare.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,
Fac me cruce inebriari,
Et cruore Filii.

Of Jesu's death I will partake,
And I shall suffer for his sake;
Some marks on me his wounds will make.

Vouchsafe to wound me with his spear,
Christ's sacred cross I love to bear,
And with his gore I will appear.

The following verses are continued kneeling:—

Flammis ne urar succensus,
Per te, Virgo sim defensus,
In die Judicii.

THE HOLY WAY, ETC.

**Christe, cum sit hinc exire,
Da per matrem me venire
Ad palmam victoriæ.**

**Quando corpus morietur,
Fac ut animæ donetur
Paradisi gloria. Amen.**

**From hell's dire flames thy client save,
Ah! Virgin pure, this grace I crave:
On Judgment day my soul receive.**

**O Jesus Christ! I humbly pray,
That thou wilt save me on that day—
Let Mary intercede for me.**

**When death will close my eyes to rest,
O Christ! attend to her request,
And number me among the blest. Amen.**



PRAYERS

FOR ASSISTING DEVOUTLY AT THE

HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

FAITH.

GREAT GOD! Eternal Truth! I most firmly believe, that in this adorable sacrifice, Jesus Christ, my Saviour, is going to immolate himself, and to place himself in a state of death, for the sins of the world. I believe with the same faith all the sacred mysteries which are about to be renewed on this altar, because you have revealed them.

INVOCATION.

Grant me, O Lord! the graces that are necessary for me to assist at this Holy

PRAYERS AT MASS.

Mass, with all that attention, respect, devotion, and love, which so august a sacrifice requires. And you, O Blessed Spirits! who are to be, like me, the witnesses and adorers of the Great Victim that is going to offer himself, assist me in glorifying this God of my salvation, on the Altar where his Love will again sacrifice him for all mankind, and for me in particular.

Grant, O Lord! that I may not be present here like the sacrilegious Jews, the murderers and blasphemers of a dying God. May I rather conceive at this moment the most lively sorrow for my sins, through the love of you; and may I participate in the fruits of this Great Sacrifice, through the pardon which I hope, and humbly implore from your mercy.

PRAYERS AT MASS.

OFFERING AND DIRECTION OF INTENTION.

O my God! I desire to assist at this Holy Mass, to comply with the precept of the Church, (*if it be a Mass of obligation,*) in memory of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, and I offer this divine sacrifice to your Sovereign Majesty.

To acknowledge your infinite greatness; to render true homage and suitable adoration to your Sovereign Being, and to make a public avowal of my entire dependence on you, and of your absolute dominion over all creatures.

To thank you, from my whole heart, for all the graces and benefits I have received, and continue to receive from you, and for the abundant graces which you pour down on your Church.

I offer it to you as an expiation for my sins, and the sins of the world, and

by way of satisfaction for the suffering souls in Purgatory.

In fine, I offer it to implore from you, the source of all goodness, the graces that are necessary for myself, my parents, my relatives, my friends, my benefactors, my enemies, and all those for whom you wish me to pray. I beseech you, O Lord! to grant us all your grace and glory, through the precious Blood of the Man-God, who is now about to sacrifice himself on this altar for our salvation. O Holy Father! "look upon the face of your Christ!"

The Mass may be divided into four parts:—

1. The commencement, or preparation of the Sacrifice.
2. The Offertory, or oblation of the Symbols, which are the matter of the Sacrifice.
3. The Canon, or Action of the Sacrifice.
4. The Consummation of the Sacrifice.

PRAYERS AT MASS.

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SACRIFICE.

The Priest approaches the Altar.

It is yourself, O Jesus! Redeemer of the world! that I seem to behold, laden with your Cross, and the Crown of Thorns on your head! You approach, you come to this Altar to pour forth again your Blood and your life! O shall it be always in vain!

O holy and adorable Trinity! come and take possession of my whole heart; and grant that I may lose nothing of those sacred mysteries that I am about to behold, nor of the fruits derived from thence, which you have prepared for me?

Introibo, &c.

Shall I be so happy as to enter into the Sanctuary of your love, O my God! to catch its Divine fire, and to enkindle it in my heart?

PRAYERS AT MASS.

Confiteor, &c.

Purify me, beforehand, O Lord! and may I purify my own heart by the tears and sentiments of a lively sorrow, with which I desire to accompany the humble and sincere confession that I now make of all the sins of my life. They are many and grievous, and should fill me with confusion and shame. I detest and renounce them now and for ever. I humbly ask their forgiveness from you, O God! whose mercy is equal to your power.

The Priest ascends the Altar.

Hasten ye heavenly troops! Angels of glory attend! It is the innocent Isaac burdened with the heavy load of my iniquities that ascends the sacred mountain! O may I in your company admire this glorious spectacle, always ancient and ever new—a God, the victim for my sins! always living, and always dying for me!

PRAYERS AT MASS.

Kyrie Eleison. Gloria in Excelsis.

A thousand times, O my God! I conjure you to have mercy on the most miserable of sinners, and after having implored your pardon, I employ my tongue in exalting your greatness, in publishing your glory, in adoring your immense Majesty, and in acknowledging, that you alone are Great, you alone are Holy, you alone are the Lord and the Most High God!

At the Collects and Epistle.

O glorious Saints! ye blessed of your Heavenly Father, whose merits and triumph are this day celebrated by the whole Church, obtain for me the same Divine assistance by which you were sanctified.

O God! Eternal Truth! you who speak to me by your Prophets and the writings of your Apostles, grant me a docile heart, and a submissive spirit to all those holy

laws, which you have proposed for my observance.

The Gospel.

But, as I have the happiness to hear yourself, O Word of the Father, Word of God, living and vivifying Truth, may your words penetrate my inmost soul.

Divine Gospel of Jesus Christ, you shall be henceforth the object of my reverence and attention, the subject of my meditations, and the entire rule of my conduct. Love of the cross, hatred of myself, holy simplicity, true humility, persevering repentance, and ardent charity—these are the maxims of the Gospel, and I desire, O Lord! by the assistance of your grace, that they may become the virtues of my entire life.

Credo.

As I have had the happiness, O Lord! to be called to the bosom of your Church,

PRAYERS AT MASS.

I believe in all its dogmas, as I respect all its laws. You have spoken to us by the Church, and I will always listen to her, as to truth itself. I will always sacrifice to her my reason, my prejudices, my passions, my interests, and, if necessary, my life.

THE OFFERING OF THE SYMBOLS OF THE SACRIFICE.

Suscipe Sancte Pater.

BEHOLD, Great God! who it is that approaches—the adorable Victim for the sins of the world.

O Holy Father, eternal and all-powerful God! behold every thing that can excite your regard, and your mercy.

Already, in the symbols which we present you, in the bread which we offer you, the matter of the sacrifice is prepared, the victim draws nigh.

PRAYERS AT MASS.

It is no longer Abraham arranging the pile, on which his son is to be consumed, and taking the knife into his hands. Figures and shadows have passed away.

Behold the true, the only sacrifice, that is worthy of your acceptance. Receive it, O adorable Trinity! unto the odor of sweetness, or rather, as you cannot reject it, grant us, through its infinite merits, the abundance of your heavenly graces. Come, O sanctifying Spirit! Descend, O incarnate Love! Come, O divine Fire, and consume the Victim!

This is your grand, your glorious work, the incarnation of the Word renewed. Bless, therefore, your own work, in the sacrifice which we offer you. We offer you ourselves, with open hearts, and beseech you to enkindle in them this divine fire, which will enable us to love without end, on earth and in heaven, a God who is here about to display one of

PRAYERS AT MASS.

the greatest miracles of his power, in order to show us the prodigious extent of his love.

Lavabo.

Angels of Heaven ! who are about to assist the divine victim, that is going to be immolated for us, with what sentiments do you look upon sinners who come to this holy sacrifice, covered over with the leprosy of sin ?

O Lord ! purify me, one of the greatest of sinners, and cleanse my heart, that I may deserve to encompass, with the innocent, your holy altar, and to offer you this adorable sacrifice.

Secret Prayers.

I unite my intention, O Lord ! with that of your minister, who here offers his supplications in my behalf, and that of your people. I honor the silence of my Saviour in his passion, and through it I humbly beseech him, to grant me a love

PRAYERS AT MASS.

of silence, and a holy discretion in all my words and conversation.

The Preface.

O Sovereign Lord! what am I going to behold?

All your greatness concealed under the veils of bread and wine!

And whilst your love for us, ungrateful sinners, reduces you so low, the Heavens are astonished, the Angels tremble, the Seraphim cover their faces with their wings!

All the powers of the universe bow down, in adoration and praise, and with a thousand voices exalt your infinite Majesty, which fills both heaven and earth!

Christian people! let us unite our voices with theirs, and publish to the whole world this sublime and eternal canticle, Holy, Holy, Holy! is the Powerful God

PRAYERS AT MASS.

of Armies! The heavens and the earth are filled with his glory. Let us bless Him that cometh in the name of the Lord, who is the Lord Himself!

THE ACTION OF THE SACRIFICE.

Te igitur.

RECEIVE, O Great God! together with the adoration of all creatures, that of your Blessed Son.

He is going to make you an offering of his life—the principal end of sacrifice. He is a God, who is about to acknowledge your Supreme Being, your absolute dominion.

This act of dependence, worthy of being made to you alone, was prepared before all ages. Nothing was ever to be compared to this august victim, which you expected from all eternity. The

PRAYERS AT MASS.

moment it appeared, the ancient offerings of the blood of animals became an object of horror in your sight. Behold the just Abel, or rather, the God of Abel, whose blood is about to flow for the sins of mankind.

Memento.

Through the infinite merits of this blood, I pray you, O Lord! for all the graces of which I stand in need.

[Here pause, and represent to God your spiritual wants, and the graces and virtues which you particularly require.]

Having prayed for myself, O Lord! I again present you the Blood of your Son in behalf of your entire Church, and all for whom I am bound to pray, through the relations of kindred, justice, gratitude, and charity. I also offer it for my enemies, whom, for your sake, I most heartily forgive.

PRAYERS AT MASS.

Communicantes.

O Glorious Elect of God! August Mary, Queen of Heaven! O ye choirs of Apostles and Martyrs, vouchsafe me the benefit of your intercession. Lend me your hearts, that I may be all on fire at this moment, when the Eternal Son of the Living God is going to come down from heaven!

Hanc igitur, &c.

Behold him this moment! Behold this Eternal Word of God! Open wide, O ye gates of Glory, and permit the Just One to appear and descend!

O Heaven and Earth! be all attentive to those miraculous words which are going to produce the Creator of time; and to place in the hands of man, Him, by whom all things were made! And you, O holy Spirit! do you seize on all the powers of my soul, and make me

PRAYERS AT MASS.

here adore, admire, and love the Word made Flesh!

Elevation of the Host.

Eternal Son of the Living God! whom I here acknowledge really present, under the appearances of bread and wine, that are now no more, I adore you with all the powers of my soul!

Prostrate with the Angels in the most profound reverence, I love you, O my Saviour, whom I now behold on the throne of your love!

O dread Majesty! O infinite Mercy! save me—forgive me! Grant, that I may be never more separated from you!

Elevation of the Chalice.

Behold, O holy Father! this Blood of the just Abel, of your adorable Son, which is presented to you for the purpose of disarming your justice.

If I deserve only your anger, do not

at least turn away **your** face from this divine Lamb. Behold how **he** is immolated for me! Through this great price, and this powerful intercession, I confidently hope for mercy. This is the Blood that "pacifies all things in heaven and on earth." O may it restore consolation and peace to my sinful soul!

As your Eternal Son, infinitely powerful and holy as yourself, is here presented before your eyes in a state of death for the sins of the whole world, I presume to unite with his merits, the sentiments of my sorrow, that with a contrite and humble heart I may share in your mercies.

A Jesus sacrificed! a sinner humbled! This twofold spectacle cannot fail, O Lord! to excite your compassion, and to be much more pleasing in your sight than the sacrifices of Abraham or Melchisedech.

PRAYERS AT MASS.

Memento, &c.

We present you, O Lord! the Blood of this sacrificed Lamb, in behalf of our brethren of the Church suffering. You have said, O Lord! that sooner would the most tender mother forget the most beloved of her offspring, than that you would forget the children of your mercies. Behold them, O Lord! in Purgatory, suffering under the rigorous exercise of your justice. It is true, that your justice must be satisfied; but the victim which we here offer you for these holy souls is of priceless value. You love those souls, and they are in suffering. You love them, and they are separated from you. You love them, and they love you in return. O eternal Beauty! listen to the voice of the Blood of Jesus Christ, and deliver them. Your justice will receive no injury, and your love will be satisfied.

PRAYERS AT MASS.

Pater Noster. Agnus Dei.

I know, O Lord! how essentially necessary prayer is for me; and that all things are promised to prayer. I also feel my many miseries which should form the subject of my prayer. But, alas! such is my misfortune, that I do not wish to pray. I do not add good works to prayer. Nay, such is the depth of my misery, that I do not wish to be heard in prayer, that I should even be extremely sorry if you granted all my requests, and destroyed within me the tyranny of my passions. Have I not reason, then, O adorable Lamb! to repeat without ceasing this prayer at least? Take pity, O Lord! on this excess of my miseries: teach me how to pray: teach me how to act.

[Here we may prepare ourselves for a spiritual communion, if we be not to receive sacramentally.]

PRAYERS AT MASS.

THE CONSUMMATION OF THE SACRIFICE.

Communion.

O LORD of love! you who burn with a desire of being united to your creatures, why cannot I daily live in such a manner, that every day I might have the happiness of receiving your adorable body? O make me worthy, at least, of desiring to receive you! Increase and inflame this desire, and grant me grace to renew and satisfy it as frequently and as devoutly as possible.

Enter then into my soul, O divine Jesus! Come and be my consolation, my strength, and my support in this valley of tears, where I mourn in exile from you. I sigh every moment for the bliss of being united to you, and for the holy and divine union of my heart with your most Sacred and Loving Heart. This will be a pledge of that eternal

PRAYERS AT MASS.

union to which you have invited all our hearts.

The last Prayers.

How many benefits, O Lord! have I received from you, and how much ingratitude have I not shown you in return! What gratitude have I shown for that singular predilection, by which I was called to the bosom of the true Church, and provided with such abundant means of salvation? Have I been the most faithful, as I have been one of the most favored of your children? Alas! the only return I make is by increasing the number of my sins, and renewing the contempt of your precious pardon, which I have so often received.

Nevertheless, O mercy of my God! you are not yet exhausted. You still await me, and invite me to return. You offer me the sacraments, and a thousand

PRAYERS AT MASS.

means of grace. As if, dying once, was not enough to satisfy your love, you renew for me, every day, the sacrifice of your death.

O ingenious love of my God! who can thank you, who can praise you, who can make you a suitable return?

Yourselves alone, O Lord! can fulfill all my obligations, and you desire to fulfill them. You have fulfilled them in this Eucharistic Sacrifice. Accept then, O holy Father! this divine thanksgiving from your Son. They are worthy of you. They are so great, so sublime, and so infinite, that more worthy, even with all your greatness, you could not expect nor receive. O may I never forget the extent of your mercies and your favors! May I always faithfully serve you, and may I love you now, and for ever. Amen.

PSALM OF THE PASSION.

PSALM XXI.

COMMONLY CALLED THE PSALM OF THE PASSION.

(Paraphrased.)

1. O God, Jesus, my God ! look down upon me in your mercy. Do not forsake me. Let not the voice of my sins separate me from you. I am desolate and afflicted, because I have offended you.

2. I will cry out night and day to you, my Jesus. O physician of souls ! will you not hear the prayer of the sick, who has recourse to you for his cure ?

3. Divine Jesus ! I am sick ; and you can cure me if you will. O apply to my soul the precious merits of the adorable Blood which you have shed for me !

4. Who, O my Jesus ! ever hoped in you, and was deceived in his hope ? Why then, O dear Saviour ! should my confidence be in vain ?

5. O Jesus ! I am beneath the worm of the earth, for I am a sinner. I am satisfied for the love of you, to be the reproach of mankind.

6. O my Jesus ! I will remember your humiliations, when I shall be humbled ; and in the midst of my sufferings I will think on yours.

7. I thank you, O my Jesus ! for having been my Saviour and my God, even from my mother's womb. O do not depart from me for ever.

8. O divine Jesus ! come to my assistance in the

PSALM OF THE PASSION.

evil day. Affliction hangs over me ; death is near—that death which I fear so much, on account of the judgment which is to follow it. O save me, for there is no one to succor me !

9. When I think, O my Jesus ! of the account I shall have to render of all my works, I am seized with terror ; my heart melts in the midst of my bowels, like wax in fire. Ah, Lord ! do not consider my iniquities on this terrible day.

10. I feel the most lively regret, O my Jesus ! for having offended you. Vouchsafe to increase this sorrow within me, and do not suffer me to become the prey of the roaring lion.

11. My dearest Jesus ! do not withdraw your divine succor from me. Watch continually for my defence. Comfort, I beseech you, my afflicted soul.

12. O Jesus ! if you defend me against the enemies of salvation, I will make known your Holy Name to my brethren. I will burn with zeal to make them know you, and love you.

13. You are above all praise, O Jesus ! and worthy of all kinds of homage. I desire, that all mankind may fear, and praise you, and that you may be loved and served in every part of the earth.

14. I will not cease, O my Jesus ! to adore, and to invoke you—to tell you, that I place all my confidence in you, and that I love you.

STABAT MATER.

15. My Jesus ! you are all my riches and my treasure. My heart is no longer attached to any thing but you, for you are its portion. This heart will always live, because you will reign in it for ever.

16. O Jesus, King of kings ! Immortal King ! may all nations fall prostrate before you and adore you ! May all sinners be converted to you, and may all hearts be filled with your love !

17. To you sovereignty belongs, O my Jesus ! Reign then as absolute master over all the powers of my soul. I wish to have no other King but you.

18. It is for you, my soul will live, O Jesus, my God ! Do what you please in this soul which belongs to you. May all its affections tend to you, and may you live in it most perfectly for your own glory, and its salvation. Amen.

STABAT MATER.

CLOSE by the ever-hallow'd cross that bore
The bleeding Son, the afflicted Mother stood,
While pangs on pangs her tender bosom tore,
And grief pour'd forth an agonizing flood.
No pause, no respite, her affliction knew,
For her, fell anguish edged its keenest dart.
She groan'd, she sigh'd, at every breath He drew,
The sword of sorrow pierced her to the heart.

STABAT MATER.

Alas! alas! what deep, what poignant grief
Felt the fond Mother of her only born,
In that sad hour, when, sunk beyond relief,
She view'd the sufferings of her Son forlorn!
Her trembling frame with fear and horror shook,
At every wound she writhed with deadly pain,
Her piteous eye express'd in every look
Her woes too big for nature to sustain.

Ah! say what mortal could unmoved behold
Christ's sweetest Mother thus with grief oppress'd?
Who would not weep to see the tears that roll'd
Amid the storm that heaved her sacred breast?
Who could the burst of pious grief restrain,
To view her tender sympathizing eye
Speak all the anguish of His bitter pain,
And hear her answer to each groan and sigh?

In expiation of our guilty race,
Her Son she saw with cruel wounds assail'd,
She saw Him scourged, while blood run down apace,
Through hands and feet she saw sweet Jesus nail'd;
She heard Him breathe his last sad parting sigh,
A sound that harrow'd up her soul anew,
She saw Him close His godlike beaming eye,
And saw the spear send forth the heavenly dew.

Fond Mother! thou whose love was love indeed
Oh! give me by one sweet resistless prayer,
Whilst meditation sees thy Jesus bleed,
In thy vast agony of grief to share!

STABAT MATER.

Give me in loving Christ, my God, my all,
To feed the ever-glowing sacred flame!
And whilst unwearied at his shrine I fall,
To make his love my sole, my glorious aim!

O holiest Mother of my God, fix deep
Within my breast the cruel wounds he bore;
O let my soul the sacred furrows keep,
And sink them deeply ever more and more!
Let thy sweet Son my every thought possess,
His wounds be ever present to my sight!
O let me make His cruel burden less,
Whilst suffering with Him is my sole delight!

To weep true tears of anguish from my soul,
Such as thy sorrow once was seen to pour;
And with my crucified dear Lord condole,
Is the sole grace my vows and sighs implore!
Yes! this sole favor let thy bounty give,
Close by the cross with thee to take my stand
And feel new sorrow every day I live,
Whilst contemplation treads the sacred land!

O Virgin, high above all virgins crown'd,
Spurn not the suppliant that now breathes a prayer;
Give me to shed my tears in every wound,
And all his pangs with thee in thought to bear!
Day after day, each night, each silent hour,
Christ's death be still my mind's eternal food!
Let grief still pour the unexhausted shower,
Fed with His wounds, His sighs, His groans, His Blood!

LITANY OF THE PASSION.

Oh ! could I feel sore wounded with his wounds !

Oh ! could his cross inebriate my soul !

By that sweet love for him that knows no bounds,

And those fond thoughts that in my bosom roll !

With love of Him let my wrapt senses glow ;

Let the sweet flame dissolve, consume my heart !

And when I hear the last loud trumpet blow,

To him who loved thy Son thy aid impart !

O be my guard the shadow of his cross !

Christ's death be my strong bulwark and defence !

Let not my soul e'er know the deadly loss

Of grace procured me at his blood's expense !

And oh ! when Death o'ercasts its mournful gloom,

Extinguishing this body's vital heat,

In the bright regions of eternal bloom

May my glad soul its great Redeemer meet ! Amen.

THE LITANY

OF THE

PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

LITANY OF THE PASSION.

Have mercy on us.

God, the Father of Heaven,
God the Son, Redeemer of the World,
God, the Holy Ghost,
Holy Trinity, one God,
Jesus Christ, who for our redemption camest
down from Heaven,
Jesus Christ, who vouchsafest to be born of the
glorious Virgin Mary,
Jesus Christ, who for us didst take the form of
a Servant,
Jesus Christ, who didst lie in the Manger,
Jesus Christ, who didst not abhor the weeping
Sinner,
Jesus Christ, who didst macerate thy body with
hunger and thirst,
Jesus Christ, who was tempted and mocked by
the Jews,
Jesus Christ, who continuedst in prayer for us,
even till thou didst sweat blood,
Jesus Christ, who sufferedst thyself to be be-
trayed with a kiss by Judas,
Jesus Christ, who by the wicked Jews wast
taken and cast down upon the ground,
Jesus Christ, who sufferedst thyself to be led
with thy hands bound behind thy back,
Jesus Christ, who wast brought before the chief
Priests, and falsely accused,

LITANY OF THE PASSION.

Jesus Christ, who wast smitten with fists and stripes upon the face,

Jesus Christ, who wast mocked with divers reproaches,

Jesus Christ, who wast delivered to Pilate,

Jesus Christ, who wast tied to the Pillar, and scourged even into blood,

Jesus Christ, who wast clad in a purple garment, by the soldiers,

Jesus Christ, who wast crowned with most sharp thorns,

Jesus Christ, who often heardst those cruel words: Away with him, crucify him,

Jesus Christ, who being wearied and burdened, didst bear the most hard wood of the cross,

Jesus Christ, who being lifted up on the cross, wast made the companion of thieves,

Jesus Christ, who having thy hands and feet nailed to the cross, wast blasphemed by those that passed by,

Jesus Christ, whose beautiful face was made as if it was leprous,

Jesus Christ, who prayed to thy Father for thy crucifiers, and graciously heard the thief upon the cross,

Jesus Christ, who didst recommend thy most dear Mother to St. John,

. Have mercy on us.

LITANY OF THE PASSION.

Jesus Christ, who wast pierced with a spear,
and redeemedst the world with thy own
blood,

Jesus Christ, who wast buried in a tomb,

Jesus Christ, who didst rise from the dead the
third day,

Jesus Christ, who forty days afterwards as-
cended into heaven,

Jesus Christ, who sittest at the right hand of
the Father,

Jesus Christ, who art to come to judge the quick
and the dead,

Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Our Father, &c.

LET US PRAY.

Look down, O Lord, we beseech thee, upon this,

LITANY OF THE PASSION.

thy family, for whose sake our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to be delivered into the hands of the wicked, and suffer the torments of the cross, who livest and reignest, &c.



PASTORAL LETTER

OF THE

RIGHT REV. DR. WALSH,

ON THE

PROMULGATION OF THE JUBILEE

IN THE DIOCESE OF HALIFAX.



THE

INDULGENCE OF A JUBILEE.

[The Pastoral published by the Bishop of Halifax, on the occasion of the First Jubilee which was proclaimed by our Most Holy Father, Pius IX., after his accession to the Pontifical throne, contains some instructions on this important subject, which will be useful at all times. We therefore think it may be appropriately placed at the end of the "Lenten Manual."]

WILLIAM, by the Grace of God, and the favor of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Halifax.

To our Dearly Beloved Brethren in the Lord, the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Halifax,

Health and Benediction.

DEARLY BELOVED,

A consoling and delightful duty has devolved upon us; and in our deep anx-

iety for your spiritual welfare, we joyfully hasten to discharge it.

It is, to announce to you by the authority of the Apostolic See, the opening, in this diocese, of the Jubilee which has been extended by our Most Holy Father, Pius IX., to the whole Catholic world, on the auspicious occasion of his elevation to the Papal chair.

During the past year we solemnized the obsequies, and mourned the loss, of one of the most glorious and illustrious Pontiffs that ever ruled the Church of God,—a Pontiff whose memory will be justly held in eternal benediction.

In his long and memorable Pontificate the Kingdom of Christ was extended to the very extremities of the earth—the seeds of the Gospel were planted by zealous missionaries in almost every part of the known world, and were frequently watered with the blood of martyrs.

Very many new Sees were created, many vicariates established, and innumerable Missions opened in the four quarters of the globe, as well as in the Islands of Oceanica, through the untiring vigilance, the universal solicitude, the apostolic zeal, and the paternal care of this affectionate Father of the Faithful, and venerable Head of all the churches. We too, dearly beloved brethren, are indebted in an especial manner to his late Holiness not only for the erection of this diocese of Halifax, but also for having imparted the Peace of Heaven, with every spiritual blessing, to his dear children in Nova Scotia. Through his mature experience, and enlightened zeal, tranquillity has been restored, and the extensive propagation of our Holy Religion ensured in this portion of the Church.

We, ourselves, can never sufficiently express the gratitude of our heart, for the

truly paternal reception with which we were honored by this holy Pontiff, when, some three years since, we had the happiness to visit the Tombs of the Apostles, and the centre of Catholic Unity. For the earnest personal attention which he then paid to all the details of the spiritual condition of this diocese, for his deep anxiety to heal all your spiritual wounds, we shall ever continue to cherish his august name in grateful recollection.

This being the first time we have addressed you since the lamented death of our late Holy Father, Gregory XVI., we felt that we could not omit the opportunity of rendering this feeble tribute of our respect, our gratitude, and our sorrow, to the hallowed memory of one whose praise is in all the churches, and who has been a signal benefactor to you, dearly beloved brethren, as well as to ourselves.

But with what hearty thanksgiving should we not offer up our prayers to "the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation," (2 Cor. i. 3,) for the truly wonderful manner in which he so speedily consoled our Holy Mother the Church for the loss of so great and venerable a Head!

The joyful election of our present Holy Father, Pius IX., (whom God long preserve!) has diffused unmingled satisfaction throughout the Universal Church. Already "in a short space he hath fulfilled a long time." (Wisd. iv. 18.) Already is his name pronounced with hope, reverence, and affection by "every tribe; and tongue, and people." The Jew and the Gentile, the Greek and the Barbarian, the Turkish follower of Mahomet, and the wandering disciple of the Reformation, are equally loud in his praise; and if we may judge of the future, by the

THE INDULGENCE

singular events of the past year, the auspicious commencement of this glorious reign of Christ's vicar on earth, would lead us to expect an extraordinary development of Catholic Truth throughout the entire world.

To draw down the blessing of Heaven on his apostolic labors, and to promote the everlasting welfare of his innumerable and beloved flock, this illustrious successor of St. Peter has affectionately invited all his children to offer a holy violence to Heaven, (Matt. xi. 12,) by the exercise of wholesome mortification, fervent prayer, generous alms, and devout frequentation of the sacraments of the Church. For this purpose, he has proclaimed the Indulgence of a Universal Jubilee, and for the attainment of this precious spiritual blessing, he has prescribed conditions drawn from the immutable precepts of the Divine Law, and

which, if duly fulfilled, are of themselves calculated to ensure your peace with God.

Thus, it is ordained, that during the holy season of the Jubilee, you should visit the House of the Lord, and, pray before his dread sanctuary, for yourselves and for all Christian people, for the boundless diffusion of the Holy Catholic Faith, for the conversion of sinners, and the preservation of peace and true concord amongst all states and people.

You are also desired to humble your souls and mortify your bodies in a penitential fast, that our gracious God may look down upon you in mercy, and lend a favorable ear to those supplications, which from purified hearts will, we trust, ascend like incense before the throne of grace. (Ps. cxl. 1.)

And as the great precept of loving

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God with our whole hearts necessarily includes that of loving our neighbor as ourselves for his sake; and as we are assured by the disciple of love, that if we do not love our neighbor whom we behold with our corporal eyes, we cannot love God whom we do not see; and that the charity of God cannot abide in us, if we perceive our brother in want and, shutting up the bowels of compassion, refuse to stretch forth the hand of mercy for his relief, (John iv. 20, and iii. 17,) our most Holy Father has appointed the duty of alms-giving as a condition of the Jubilee, and has called upon you in the name of the God of love, who, when he was rich, made himself poor for your sakes, (2 Cor. viii. 9,) to relieve by your alms the suffering members of Jesus, to assist, according to your ability, his beloved poor, that noble and dignified portion of his glorious Church. From the

OF A JUBILEE.

truly generous exertions which you have already made on behalf of the famishing people of Ireland, and from the noble manner in which we have always found you to respond to the cry of suffering humanity, we are convinced, dearly beloved brethren, that you will cheerfully perform this great Christian duty on the present occasion.

You are next required to approach the Sacrament of Penance, and, in the precious Blood of "the Lamb without spot," to "cleanse your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God." (Heb. ix. 14.) You are required to renounce sin with all its dangerous occasions; to recall before your God, and in the bitterness of your hearts, the crimes of your past years, (Isai. xxxviii. 15;) to turn with your whole hearts to that merciful Creator whom you have so ungratefully offended; to make every reparation in

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your power to God and to your neighbor for the injuries you have committed against them, and, in a word, to "bring forth fruits worthy of Penance." (Matt. iii. 8.) Need we remind you, dearly beloved brethren, that of all the conditions of the Jubilee, this destruction of sin by unfeigned repentance through the merits of Christ, is so essential and indispensable, that no Indulgence whatsoever can be gained without it? For, when an Indulgence is accorded by the Church to her children, its principal object is, to inspire them with a horror of sin, and a love of virtue. She places before the sinner "the multitude of God's mercies" (Ps. l. 2) in order to cheer his fainting heart, and save his immortal soul from the horrors of eternal death. She proclaims that so long as sin reigns in that guilty soul, it can have no share in the spiritual Indulgence, which is granted

only to those who have died to sin, and live the life of grace. She unlocks her spiritual treasures, and displays them as the glorious and exclusive rewards of those who shall wage a deadly war with Satan, and become victorious over sin and hell. And hence we have always seen that the season of a Jubilee, or General Indulgence, is a time of meditation and prayer, of fasting and alms-deeds, of reconciliation and forgiveness, of mortification and penance. Then are filled the courts of the Lord, and before his sanctuary are found a vast multitude of worshippers. Then the prodigal child returns to the affectionate embraces of his Heavenly Father, and the wandering sheep is brought back by the good shepherd to the happy fold of security and peace. The drooping heart of the sinner is then revived by the dew of Heaven, many sins are forgiven him because he loves

much, (Luke vii. 47,) and his entire reconciliation with his offended God is ratified and sealed in the Holy Communion, with the precious Blood of "the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world." (John i. 29.)

This brings us to the consideration of the last condition of the Jubilee, which is, to receive worthily the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist. For this purpose, it is necessary that we "prove" ourselves as the great Apostle of the Gentiles recommends, (1 Cor. xi. 28,) that we expel the devil with all his works and pomps from our heart, before we presume to introduce the Judge of the living and the dead; that "discerning the body of the Lord" (Ibid.) from all other food, we may receive it in a clean heart, and not eat and drink our own damnation.

This holy condition is an additional proof, if proof were wanted, that no

Christian in the dreadful state of mortal sin, can obtain the Indulgence of the Jubilee, or indeed any Indulgence whatsoever. This you know, dearly beloved brethren, as well as that great Catholic truth, of which we hardly think it necessary to remind you, viz.: that no power on earth could give you permission to commit the smallest offence against God. This is the doctrine of your Church; these are the tenets of your religion which have stood the test of time and discussion, and which, when assailed, are always misrepresented, because, without misrepresentation, they cannot be successfully impugned.

For we are taught to believe, that on the commission of a grievous crime against the law of God, the sinner contracts with the Divine Justice a two-fold debt—the one eternal, the other temporal; an eternal debt, which if un-

cancelled in this life must be discharged for ever in the fire of hell; a temporal debt, which is effaced either by the prayers, good works, and afflictions of the sinner in this life, or by the purgation of the middle state in the next. The former, that is, the eternal debt, is never affected by an Indulgence; to the remission of the temporal debt alone, is an Indulgence applied. The eternal debt is remissible only by sacramental absolution received with due dispositions in the tribunal of Penance, or by perfect contrition, when a recourse to the Sacrament of Penance is impossible. Whilst the sinner is in a state of enmity with God, and this eternal debt remains unpaid, he receives no remission of the temporal debt, and hence, an Indulgence to him is perfectly nugatory. On the contrary, an Indulgence is granted on the supposition that sin has been either re-

moved or destroyed by the previous remission of the eternal debt. For this reason its privileges are never conceded by the Church, unless to those who are in the state of grace, and therefore one of the ordinary conditions of this spiritual favor is—as on the present occasion—that the individual who is to gain it, shall worthily receive the Sacrament of Penance. From those principles it follows, that the eternal debt due by sin can be remitted, while the temporal debt, or at least some portion of it, may still remain. Of this truth we have the clearest Scriptural evidence, in addition to the constant practice and teaching of the Church from the Apostolic age.

The example of David alone would be a sufficient illustration and proof. After the commission of two most grievous crimes, a Prophet is sent him by the Most High to reveal to him the enormity

of his offence, and to excite him to repentance. The royal penitent is touched with remorse, his soul is filled with the grief of true compunction, and in the bitterness of an humble and contrite heart, he openly confesses that he has "sinned against the Lord." The Prophet on the part of God replies: "The Lord also hath taken away thy sin." Here is the remission of what we call the eternal debt. David is restored to the state of grace and friendship with God, in consideration of his sincere repentance. But immediately after, the Prophet announces those temporal evils which were to befall him, and from which even fasting and prayer did not deliver him, thereby intimating that another debt contracted with the Divine Justice was still unpaid. "*Nevertheless the child that is born to thee shall surely die.*" (2 Kings xii. 13, 14.)

The amount of temporal debt or punishment annexed to each crime is known only to Him who alone can understand the malice and enormity of sin, and determine in justice what satisfaction ought to be rendered to his outraged majesty. In the fervent ages of Christianity, when primitive discipline was in full vigor, the Catholic Church in her Penitential Canons imposed upon every sinner a course of satisfactory works proportioned to the number and enormity of his crimes. This penitential discipline was intended not only as a wholesome restraint and healing remedy, but also as a punishment of sin. The sinner was thus enabled to satisfy the offended justice of God, and to avert by his own voluntary works of penance, the temporal evils which impended over him. According to the nature of the offence, was this penitential course prolonged, or

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abridged by the Church. In some cases, it was mitigated either on account of the great fervor or delicate health of the penitent, the intercession of the martyrs or confessors of the faith in prison, or through some other equally religious and prudent motive. In process of time this severe discipline began to relax, until at length, from the decay of morals, the tepidity of the faithful, and many other causes, it almost wholly disappeared. Nevertheless, the Church continued to teach her children the necessity of appeasing God's wrath by satisfactory works, and of removing the temporal chastisements due to their sins by voluntary practices of atonement through the merits of Christ; and, in order to encourage them to sincere repentance, she changed the rigid discipline of ancient usage for other works of charity and piety, thereby imparting Indulgences to

x merits of the saints ...
OF A JUBILEE.
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x
her children from the rich treasury of which she is the guardian and dispenser, and releasing them in the sight of God from either all, or a portion of that temporal debt to which we have alluded. That she has power to absolve her children in the latter sense, we know from the universal privilege conferred upon her by Jesus Christ when he said, without any exception or limitation, "WHATSOEVER thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven;" and again: "Amen I say unto you, WHATSOEVER you shall bind upon earth it shall be bound also in heaven; and WHATSOEVER you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18. See also John xx. 23.)

We thus perceive, dearly beloved brethren, how rational and scriptural is this doctrine of Indulgences in which the

*x ho - it only shortens pun-
ishment - as it is not enough
an awful thing to sin!*

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Divine Justice and Mercy are sweetly blended together, and by which our Holy Mother the Church succors the spiritual weakness, and promotes the eternal welfare of her beloved children.

When, therefore, you shall hear in the approaching days of the Jubilee, those "who blaspheme what they know not," (Jude. 10,) reviling the tenets of the Catholic Church, and, amongst other misrepresentations, falsely asserting that an Indulgence is a license for crime, or a permission to commit sin, "do you who are spiritual, instruct," or at least endure the taunts of "such a one in the spirit of meekness" (Galat. vi. 1) and charity, remembering that our Lord himself was calumniated on earth, and had false testimony adduced against him, to which he replied only by an admirable and patient silence, and that he has declared in his Gospel: "Blessed are you when

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men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, because your reward is very great in heaven." (Matt. v. 11, 12.)

Prepare yourselves, dearly beloved brethren, for a secure participation in the many spiritual blessings of the approaching Jubilee. For "behold now is the acceptable time; these are the days of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) How happy shall we be if all that was prefigured by the Jubilee of Moses, shall be accomplished in us! Of the ancient Jubilee it was written: "In the year of the Jubilee all shall return to their possessions." (Levit. xxv. 13.) Let us therefore strive to recover, by sincere repentance, the possession of that eternal inheritance which we received at our baptism, but have unhappily forfeited by sin; and accept this Indulgence of

the Church with respectful gratitude and an entire obedience of faith.

We have declared to you before, that in order to gain an Indulgence, you must be in the state of sanctifying grace; and that none but the just, and the friends of God, can reap the advantages of the Jubilee. All obdurate and impenitent sinners are therefore excluded; and as this may be the last opportunity of conversion which many of you can enjoy, we beseech you to embrace it with all the ardor of your souls, for "it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews x. 31.)

Wherefore, "laying aside every weight and the sin that surroundeth us, by patience let us run to the fight proposed unto us; looking on Jesus the author and finisher of faith." (Ib. xii. 1.)

Let us go up into the Tabernacle of the Lord, and adore in the place where

his feet hath stood, (Ps. cxxxi.,) "that we may see the delight of the Lord, and visit his temple." (Ps. xxvi.) We "shall go over into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise." (Ps. xli.) "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord! they shall praise thee for ever and ever for better is one day in thy courts above thousands." (Ps. lxxxiii.) After having fulfilled this condition of the Jubilee, and offered our petitions to our Heavenly Father in the name of his Son Jesus, we will be enabled to say with the Royal Psalmist: "We have received thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple." (Ps. xlvii. 10.)

To the holy exercise of prayer you will add the salutary practice of fasting, which is commended to us by the example of the saints in the old and new

Covenant, as well as in the person of the King of Saints himself. (Deutr. ix. 9, 18, 1 Kings vii. 6; 3 Kings xix. 8, xxi. 27; 2 Paral. xx. 3; Daniel x; Ezechiel xvii. 32; Joel ii. 13; Psalms passim; Matt. iv. 1; Luke ii. 37; Acts xii. 2, 3, &c.) We read in the Book of Life that when "dread and horror seized upon the minds" of "the children of Israel" on account of the apprehended invasion of the cruel Holofernes, "they did as the Priest of the Lord, Eliachim, had appointed them. And all the people cried to the Lord with great earnestness; and they humbled their souls in fastings and prayers and they cried to the Lord the God of Israel with one accord Then Eliachim, the High Priest of the Lord, went about all Israel, and spoke to them, saying: Know ye that the Lord will hear your prayers, if you continue with perseverance in fastings and prayers

in the sight of the Lord." (Judith iv. 2-11.) We give you the same assurance, dearly beloved brethren, and promise you in the name of the Lord, that if you pour forth your souls in prayer, and humble them in fasting, "the ear of the Most High will listen even to the preparation of your hearts," (Ps. x. 17,) and the Lord from heaven will "forgive the iniquity of his people, and cover all their sins. He will mitigate all his anger, and turn away from the wrath of his indignation." (Ib. lxxxiv. 3.)

As another powerful means towards the remission of your sins, you will not fail to give alms to the poor during the hallowed season of the Jubilee. This was the advice of the Prophet to an idolatrous king: "Redeem thou thy sins with alms and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor." (Dan. iv. 24.) This was also the merciful admonition of the

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Redeemer himself to the proud Pharisee in the Gospel: "Give alms and behold all things are clean unto you." (Luke xi. 41.) Whence, as "God loves the cheerful giver," (2 Cor. ix. 7,) give alms according to your ability, "for he that hath a compassionate understanding for the needy and the poor," is declared "blessed, and the Lord will deliver him in the evil day," (Prov.; Ps. xl. 1;) on that calamitous and dreadful day when "in great power and majesty the Son of man shall come" (Luke xxi. 27) to judge the world, and to admit to the everlasting kingdom of his Father, all those charitable souls who will have fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, and clothed the naked.

The Holy Ghost further assures us, dearly beloved brethren, that "He that hideth his sins shall not prosper: but he that shall confess and forsake them,

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shall obtain mercy." (Prov. xxviii. 13.) Prepare yourselves then by a serious examination of your lives for an humble, penitent, and sincere confession of your sins, after which you will "Go and show yourselves to the priest," (Matt. viii.; Luke iv.,) who is commissioned by God to heal the diseases of your soul; and who, if you be truly contrite, is invested with a power unknown to the Jewish priests of old. They merely declared the removal of a corporal leprosy, whereas the priest of the new covenant can absolve you from the spiritual leprosy of sin, by virtue of the august powers intrusted by Christ to his Apostles, and their successors in the ministry, when he said to them after his resurrection: "Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them, and he said to them: Receive ye the

Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven him; and whose sins ye shall retain they are retained." (St. John xx. 21, 23; *St. Chrysost. de Sacerdotio*, lib. iii. c. 6.) "If we confess our sins, our God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all iniquity." (1 John i. 9.)

Finally, the other good works of the Jubilee will be all crowned by the devout reception of the Body and Blood of the Lord in the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist. By eating the Flesh, and drinking the Blood of the Son of man, you will have life in you, and he will raise you up at the last day. (John vi.) He will abide in you, and you in Him, so that you can say with the Apostle of the Gentiles, "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Ibid.; Galat. ii. 20.) Thus you will no longer pray, or fast, or perform any other good

work of yourselves alone: but Christ will pray in you and communicate to all your good works the meritorious efficacy of his passion, and "His Holy Spirit will ask for you with unspeakable groanings, and help your infirmity, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought." But "if Christ be in you he that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, shall quicken also your mortal bodies because of his spirit dwelling in you." (Rom. viii. 26, 10, 11.)

But as this sublime and glorious act of Christianity by which the creature is closely united to its God, requires the purest and most holy preparation, we earnestly exhort you to commence this preparation without delay. "It is truly a great work, for a habitation is preparing not for man, but for God!" (1 Par. xxix. 1.) For we ask you in the language of an illustrious Doctor of the

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Church : "What ought not he to exceed in purity, who is a partaker of so great a sacrifice? What sunbeam should not that hand exceed in brightness, which divides this Flesh? that mouth which is filled with this spiritual fire? that tongue which is empurpled with this exceedingly tremendous Blood? Think, therefore, on the great honor with which thou art adorned, and the singular table of which thou dost partake. What the angels behold with reverence, and will not dare to look upon too freely on account of its glittering splendor—that we feed upon, to that we are united, and we are thereby made one body, and one flesh with Christ!" (*St. John Chrysostom, Hom. 60, to the people of Antioch.*)

"Wherefore," we beseech you in the words of the same eloquent Father and deep expounder of the Scriptures, "let no one approach the holy communion

with tepidity or indifference. Let all be enkindled, fervent, and excited to love. . . . Let no Judas or avaricious creature assist, for such are not received at this table. Let no cruel or pitiless Christian, no unclean sinner approach; but if there be a true disciple let him come; for Christ has said: 'with my disciples I celebrate the Pasch.'" (*Ibid.*)

We have now, dearly beloved brethren, briefly described to you the conditions on which you may obtain a relaxation of the Canonical Penances attached to your sins by the wholesome discipline of the primitive Church, and a remission of the temporal punishment due to your crimes after their eternal debt shall be forgiven. We have appointed, and we hereby ordain and declare, that the Jubilee shall open throughout our diocese on Sunday, the 30th of May, the Feast of the Most

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Holy and Undivided Trinity, and that it will terminate on Sunday, the 20th of June, the fourth after Pentecost, and the Feast of St. Silverius, Pope and Martyr, both days included.

“We are, therefore, ambassadors for Christ, God, as it were, exhorting by us” at this season of mercy. “For Christ, we beseech you, be ye reconciled to God. . . . And we helping, do exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain. . . . For the rest, brethren rejoice, be perfect; take exhortation; be of one mind; have peace, and the God of peace and love will be with you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen. (2 Corinth. v. 20; vi. 1; xiii. 11, 13.)

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